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Video Games & Computer Entertainment[®]

Inside SPECIAL 47-PAGE GENESIS SECTION

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November 1990

MAPS & TIPS:

ACCLAIM'S

Swords and Serpents, Part I

ELECTRONIC ARTS'

Populous

BRØDERBUND'S

Battle of Olympus, Part II

ELVIRA

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Software on Page 10 and Spectrum Holobyte on Page 215!



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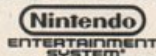
You'll face Androboy the Hunter whose box is bigger than his bite.



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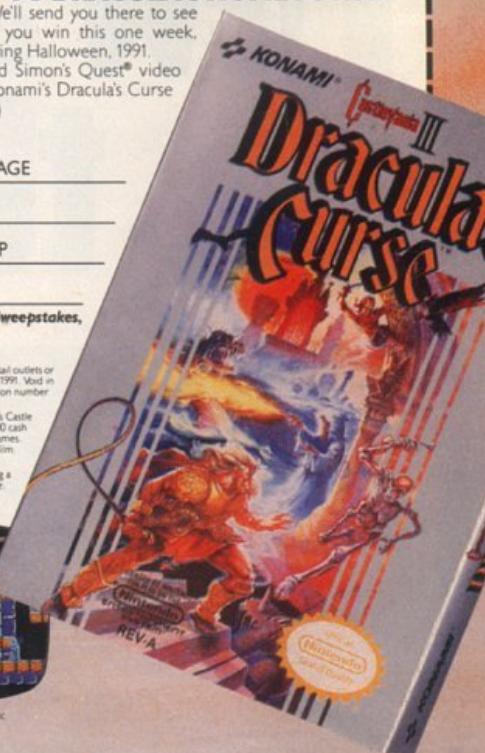
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Please mail no later than February 28, 1991 to: *Dracula's Curse* Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 23258, Milwaukee, WI 53224.

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1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Fill in form provided here, in the *Dracula's Curse* game package, at retail outlets or print the information on a 3" x 5" card. Mail in an envelope. All entries must be received by March 15, 1991. Void in Quebec and where prohibited. Must be a U.S. or Canadian resident to enter. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. Canadian winner may be required to answer a skill question.
2. SWEETSTAKES PRIZES: 1 GRAND PRIZE: 1 (one) week all-expense paid trip for 4 (four) to Dracula's Castle (Brian Castle) in Transylvania, Romania on October 29-November 5, 1991. Cash value \$14,552 for \$5,000 cash alternative; 25 FIRST PRIZES: 1 (one) copy each of Konami's *Castlevania*® and *Simon's Quest*® NES™ games. Cash value \$64 (both games); 50 SECOND PRIZES: 1 (one) video cassette of the original "Dracula" film. Cash value \$20 each.
3. SWEETSTAKES subject to complete Official Rules, posted on retail entry pads and available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Dracula's Curse Official Rules Request, P.O. Box 23259, Milwaukee, WI 53224. Request must be received by February 15, 1991.



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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Elvira will soon be making her way to computer screens, thanks to Accolade's *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*. Turn to page 140 for more scary software.

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Cover Art: Jim McDermott

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NOVEMBER 1990



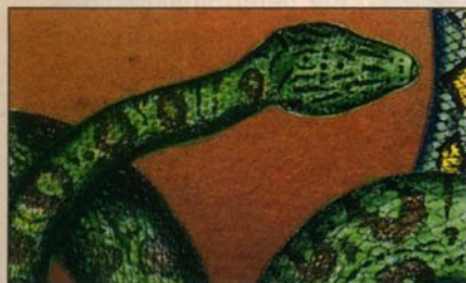
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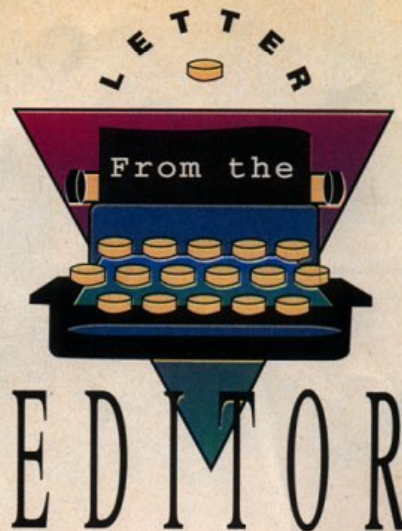
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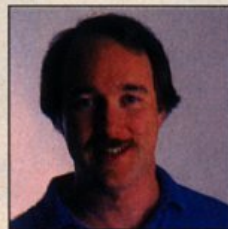
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In the August 1990 issue of VG&CE, I spoke about the "World of Video Games," the online link between our editors and you, the reader. (If you need a refresher, turn to page 163 for details on how you can join us on Delphi in this special-interest group.) Since that time, we've gotten a great response, and it's nice to have met all of you.

Among the discussions that have taken place is one we've moderated before: Which video-game machine is the best? Unfortunately, these "chats" usually end up somewhat heated, similar to the "my dad is bigger than your dad" battle.



The Sega Genesis and NEC's TurboGrafx-16 are entangled in a hot battle over which is the leading "next-generation" video-game console. As noted in our August issue (see Frank Eva's article "Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 Take on the 16-Bit Computers"), it's obvious how similar the two game consoles are in ability. But people still get defensive and have strong opinions about which machine they feel is the best.

When you have choices to make, lots of things have to be considered. For instance, you can buy any of a dozen car brands, and you'll use many different criteria to make an informed buying decision.

A similar strategy should be used when you purchase a video-game machine—though, of course, they are much cheaper than cars. And these days, thanks to Nintendo's ex-

clusivity clause in software contracts, much of the decision comes down to what game titles you'd like to play, how much money you can afford to spend and the capabilities of the system.

However, when deciding between the Genesis and the TG-16, much of it boils down to what games you like. The capabilities don't vary substantially between the two systems, and price is also similar.

My feeling is that, given current technology, the determining factors are the number of colors that can be displayed at once and the quality of game design.

The point I made to some of these online "combatants" is that there are good and bad games for both systems. For instance, though we're overly impressed with the Neo-Geo, the designs of the first games we played on that system lack that game play that makes you want to try over and over. And the Neo-Geo has better specs than either the Genesis or the TG-16.

It's not a matter of "better" with regards to the hardware, in my opinion, but rather how designers use that hardware. If corners are cut, the game will look bad; if the full palette of colors are employed, objects will appear smoother and more realistic. Let's try to have fun with our games, and save our arguments for which baseball team is the best.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

IF YOU FIGURE THIS READY FOR

Pipe Dream. If you're a Game Boy™ or NES® player, you're looking at the next big thing. Because it all comes down to you vs. a whole warehouse full of plumbing parts. And the forces of chaos. But you've got four powerful weapons. Your right hand. Your left hand. Your right brain. And your left brain.

In the real game, this slimy green stuff called flooz starts flowing through the pipes. To stay ahead of it, you have to build the most radical pipeline you can dream up. And that's exactly what you have to do with this puzzle.

Start where it says START, and put each of the nine pipes in an empty square. Make sure every little white dot stays in the top left corner, or your entry won't count. Some pieces have two straight pipes crossing each other. The flooz always flows straight across these pipes and out the opposite side. If you can make your pipeline loop around so the flooz crosses through one of these pieces twice, you'll score bonus points.

(Hint: To get the highest score, you don't have to connect all nine pieces to every pipe on the grid.)

So if this sounds like



PIPE DREAM CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ My score is _____

\$1000 BONUS PRIZE! Answer question 1 or 2 to qualify. (Optional)

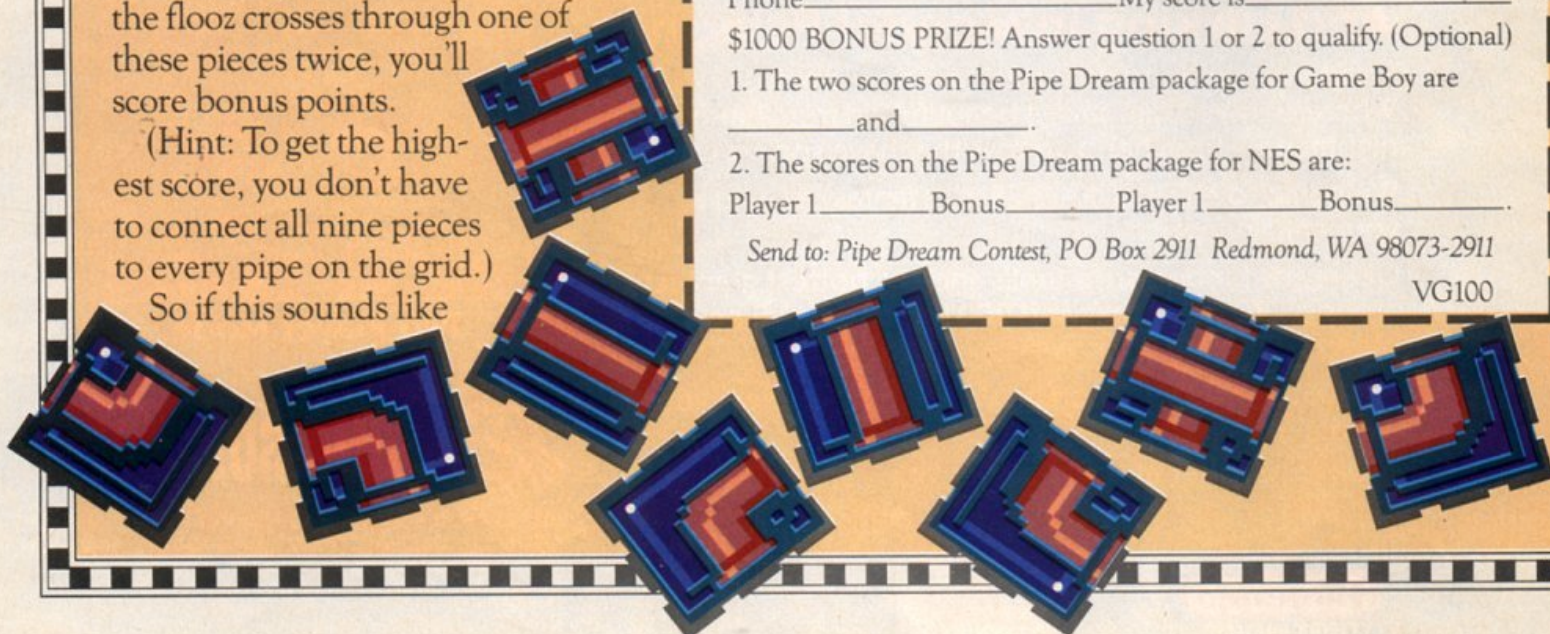
1. The two scores on the Pipe Dream package for Game Boy are _____ and _____.

2. The scores on the Pipe Dream package for NES are:

Player 1 _____ Bonus _____ Player 1 _____ Bonus _____

Send to: Pipe Dream Contest, PO Box 2911 Redmond, WA 98073-2911

VG100



OUT, YOU MIGHT BE PIPE DREAM.™

your kind of game, try it now. Then go down to your Nintendo dealer, and see what it's like for real. When you've got nine million gallons of flooz breathing down your neck. And gaining.

HOW TO ENTER:

Cut the puzzle pieces out of this magazine and paste them in the right places on the grid. Or make a copy and work with that. Then send in the puzzle and the completed form to us.

All entries must be received by January 31, 1991.

IMPORTANT: Write your score on the back of the envelope. Unscored or incorrectly scored entries will be disqualified.

HOW TO TOTAL YOUR SCORE

Add 100 points: For every square the flooz flows through. Don't count the starting piece. Count all the pieces you place, and all the pieces that you use on the grid.

500 point bonus: For each place the flooz crosses itself in a cross pipe. (Plus the basic 100 points for the square.)

500 point bonus: For each piece marked "BONUS" the flooz flows through. (Plus the basic 100 points.)

Subtract 100 points: For every piece you don't use, including the pieces you cut out, and the pieces that are already on the grid.

If you figure out the highest score, you win. In case of a tie, winners will be decided by random drawing.

GRAND PRIZE—A TRIP TO NINTENDO!

If you're one of our three Grand Prize winners, you'll get a trip to Seattle for 4 days and 3 nights. Your prize includes round trip airfare for two, and hotel accommodations. You'll get the grand tour of Nintendo. Meet Nintendo Game Counselors. Talk some hard-core NES with them. You'll even have lunch at Cafe MarioSM where all the Nintendo people eat. And a

dinner at the Space Needle in your honor.

So, if you want to see how intense Pipe Dream really is,

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Enter our \$1,000 drawing, too! Answer one bonus question on the entry form and you could win. Here's how: On the back of the Pipe Dream package, there are pictures of two screens with scores on them. Include the scores from either the NES or Game Boy box on the entry coupon.



head on down to your Nintendo dealer. When you get there, this is what the packages look like. But you better get there soon. Or they'll look

like an empty space on the dealer's shelf.



BULLET-PROOF SOFTWARE™

OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES (No Purchase Necessary) One entry per person, please. All entries must be received no later than January 31, 1991. No responsibility is assumed for lost, stolen, or misdirected mail. In the event of a tie, winners will be chosen by random drawing, on or about February 5, 1991. Regardless of score, BONUS PRIZE will be determined by random drawing from all entries that answer Bonus question. It is not necessary to answer this question to qualify for Grand, Second, or Third Prize awards. Winners will be notified by mail. By acceptance of their prizes, winners consent to use of their names, photographs, or other likenesses for the purpose of advertising or promotion on behalf of Bullet-Proof Software (BPS) without further compensation. Chances of winning are determined by the total number of entries received. Limit one prize per household. No substitution of prizes is permitted. All prizes will be awarded. A list of winners will be available after February 5, 1991 by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Pipe Dream Winners, 8337 154th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052. BPS will arrange air travel and hotel accommodation for each Grand Prize winner and his or her guest. BPS will also provide \$300 spending money, lunch at Cafe Mario, and dinner at the Space Needle. All other expenses are responsibility of game winner. Approximate value of each Grand Prize: \$2,500. Grand Prize excursion dates will be determined by BPS. If the winner is under 18, they must be accompanied by their parent or guardian. Any guest under the age of 14 must provide written parental consent and release. Some restrictions apply. Contest not open to employees of BPS, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Nintendo of America Inc., their affiliates, agencies, or their immediate families. This contest is void in Canada and elsewhere where prohibited by law. This contest is subject to all federal, state, and local taxes and regulations. Taxes and fees are sole responsibility of winners.



COMMENDATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Dear VG & CE:

I must commend you on a fine job on the July issue of your magazine. I myself love portable systems and found your "Game Boy Buyer's Guide," "The TurboGrafx-16 Goes Into the Shrinking Machine" and *Gaming on the Go* articles very well-done. I have two corrections. First of all, in your *News Bits* column you stated that the FM-Towns was displayed publicly for the second time at the Microsoft CD-ROM Conference. But wasn't it shown at the Winter CES show in Las Vegas? (I saw the FM-Towns at the Galaxy of Electronic Games in San Jose late last year.)

Second of all, to Maurice Molyneaux, who wrote *Gaming on the Go* about the Lynx, *California Games* is a four-player game. Even though the instruction manual doesn't say it, all the events support multiplayer simultaneous play.

—Dennis Lee
Union City, California

PS: One of the things I like about your mag is the number of pages we get for the price. Thanks! Keep up the good work.

Thanks for the kind words, Dennis. We try to keep all our dedicated readers happy, and it looks like we are doing our job. The number of pages is a result of the advertising in the magazine: The more ads, the more articles we can put in the magazine. As you can see from this issue, we're getting support from the various video-game companies. In turn, we'd appreciate it if you would tell these companies that you saw their ad in VG&CE!

To our recollection, the FM-Towns wasn't shown at the Winter CES, at least not publicly. Often new products

are shown to potential buyers and press in advance of the release to judge opinion and garner some early publicity. This may have been the case with the FM-Towns. There is still no set date for this machine to be released in America.

You're right about California Games being a four-player game. Our apologies for not being clearer about that in the Gaming on the Go column.



FAIRLY FAIR COMPETITION

Dear VG & CE:

I called Tengen the other day to see what new reason Nintendo had to sue them. Your rumors are correct! Nintendo is threatening to sue retail chains that sell Tengen products and rival systems like Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 and Lynx. Nintendo hasn't done anything yet, but I'm still annoyed by this.

Nintendo says it's going against Tengen because unlicensed games are "illegal." This is being fought in court and will be for some time. (How does 12-18 months sound?) But examine the facts: In addition to Tengen, you've got Color Dreams, Sharedata and, soon, Camerica making unlicensed NES software, but Nintendo hasn't even acknowledged their existence! Tengen is the only one that Nintendo is after. Why? I'll put it this way. Who first broke light on Nintendo's business practices and pushed a U.S. government investigation of the whole issue? It was Tengen. After it reported that Nintendo has established a monopoly—and they have, I believe—Nintendo has sued this company right

and left. Nintendo is after these guys because Tengen started talking about what's really going on, how Nintendo really got to the top. This is unacceptable. Nintendo can't get away with this!

But what can we do? We're the people that could bankrupt Nintendo literally overnight, because as consumers, we buy their products: the NES, GameBoy and in-house software. It's up to us to do something about this situation, and it will sound a bit drastic to some. We must boycott Nintendo's products! I'm not saying trash your NES, but don't buy anything anymore that's made and/or marketed by Nintendo. If you're intent on keeping the NES around, don't buy games made by Nintendo and turn around and buy NES software from other companies (Konami, Capcom, etc.), especially Tengen! Most important, you must contact Nintendo directly, and tell them how you feel about Tengen and the entire monopoly issue at large. With enough letters and phone calls, the big "N" is bound to listen.

We can't rely on the government to take care of this for us. As electronic gamers, we must make ourselves known and take a stand! Taito or Tengen might not be able to stand against Nintendo, but with the game players at their side, the day will come when game companies can write software for all systems, when the whole licensing concept will be thrown out the window, and everyone has a chance to compete fairly for the American dollar. That's what free enterprise is. Wouldn't you love to see *Twin Cobra*



Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

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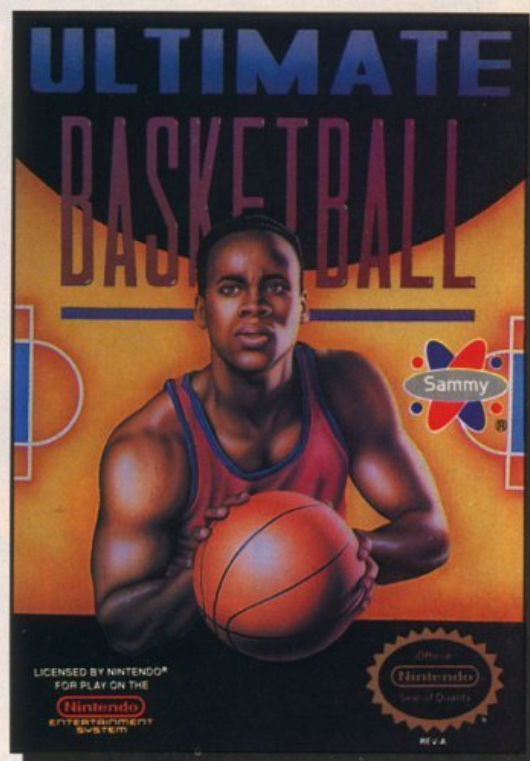
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on the TG-16, *Contra* on the Genesis or *Double Dragon* on the Lynx? And it would all be possible because we took a stand. Isn't America great?!

—Dan MacInnes
Duluth, Minnesota

Wow, Dan—don't hold back, okay? Seriously, much of what you talk about—the so-called intimidation and threats—is something that takes place behind the scenes, and is hard to prove. As we write this, word has come to us that the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) is subpoenaing various people in the industry to testify about some of the issues you bring up. Hopefully, we'll soon see what the legal system has to say about the video-game biz.

OH, CRYSTAL BALL...

Dear VG & CE:

First of all, let me comment on the fine publication you guys put out. Your magazine seems to get the information first and makes sure that your

readers know as soon as possible.

Another reason I find your magazine so interesting is that my hobbies are computers and video games, and you guys combine the two, making sure that they are balanced so that your magazine applies to all readers.

My favorite section is the *News Bits* column. I like reading about all the things that are happening in the field of video games. However, in the course of reading the news, I find that not all of it is actually that good.

This concern of mine was elucidated in the *Inside Gaming* section in the June issue. There seem to be so many companies and companies breaking off of those companies. And like everything else that happens in the corporate world today, there seems to be some major competition.

Especially now, with the new 16-bit systems, the companies that produce them are so good at doing their own thing. My concern is that these guys will be so intent in the near future on becoming the best that their software output will be of tremendous quantity

and of poor quality and thus a repeat of the slump that the video-game industry experienced in the mid '80s. Could you please shed a little more light on the subject?

—Jeff Anderson
Tempe, Arizona

Indeed, Jeff, this was the subject of the Letter From the Editor in the September issue of VG&CE. It's our concern as well that "too many cooks spoil the broth," a situation we feel is just around the corner. Of course, the current market is good, so it's hard to say what will take place; but anything could happen. It's a strange industry, as evidenced by the crash in 1983. We seriously doubt that we are headed for a similar situation now, but much of the grapevine information says that this time next year we'll see fewer companies producing video-game products than there are right now.

We'll just have to sit back and see what happens, and VG&CE will continue to inform you as to what develops. Thanks for reading. 📖

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

CORRECTIONS

In the September issue of VG&CE, in *Medallions and Magic: A Players Guide to Neutopia*, we inadvertently mislabeled the game as for the Genesis. It is for the TurboGrafx-16. We also neglected to print some vital maps for *Neutopia*, which can be found on the next page.

Also, in the Neo-Geo article in our October issue, some facts have changed from when we initially wrote the report.

- SNK claims it will continue to be a Nintendo licensee and will be displaying NES products at the Winter CES, contrary to what we reported.

- The suggested retail prices for Neo-Geo products will likely be different than we reported. The cost of the Neo-Geo console will be closer to \$500, and cartridges will run approximately \$225 each.

- It's likely that SNK will market the Neo-Geo as a rental unit (as it has done in Japan) through video stores in North America, in addition to making it available for home purchase.

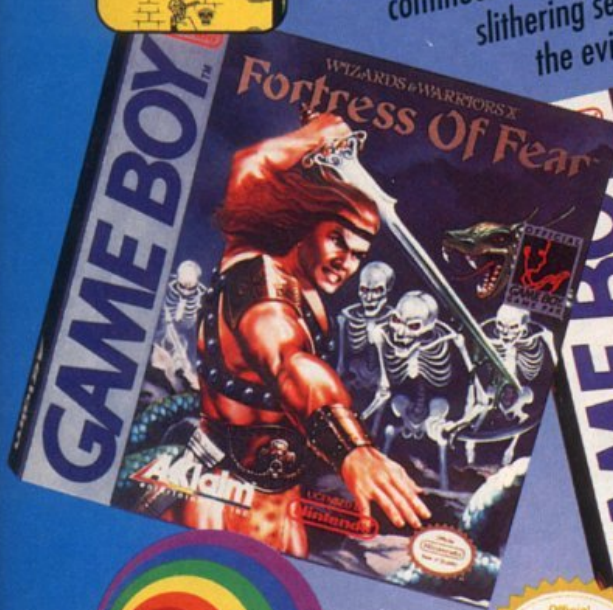
As more information on the Neo-Geo comes to us, we will pass it on to you in a future issue of VG&CE.



DRAGON SLAYING! GAME BOY ACTION! WEB SLINGING!

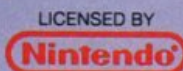


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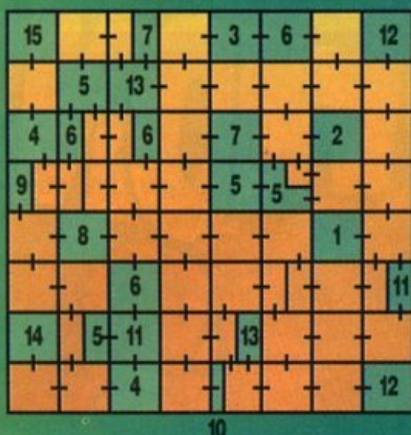
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In our strategy guide to *Neutopia* (VG&CE, September 1990), we neglected to run the area and labyrinth maps, which are shown below.

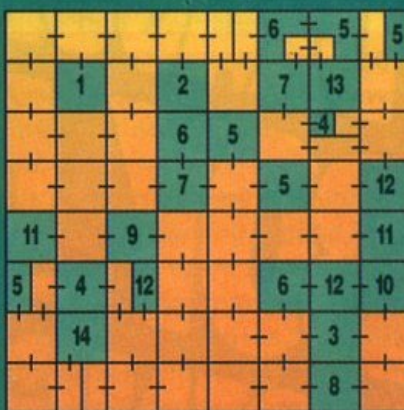
Our apologies for this omission.

AREA THREE: SPHERE IN THE SEA



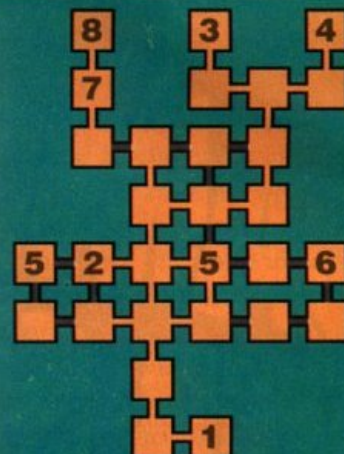
- 1 Start
- 2 Up Max Bombs
- 3 Falcon Shoes
- 4 Password
- 5 Medicine
- 6 Bombs
- 7 Healer
- 8 Gold
- 9 Gate Keeper
- 10 Steel Shield
- 11 Magic Ring
- 12 Stairs
- 13 To Temple
- 14 Labyrinth 5
- 15 Labyrinth 6

AREA FOUR: CASTLE IN THE SKY



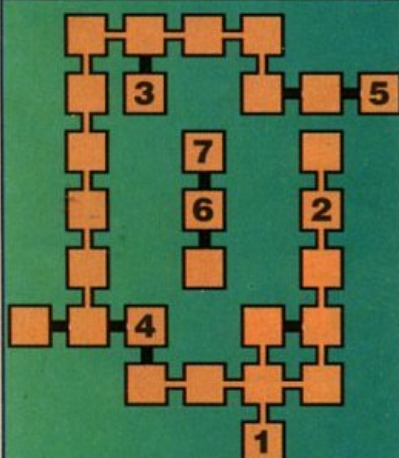
- 1 Start
- 2 Up Max Bombs
- 3 Strongest Sword
- 4 Password
- 5 Medicine
- 6 Bombs
- 7 Healer
- 8 Altar
- 9 Medicine & Bombs
- 10 Magic Ring
- 11 Stairs
- 12 To Temple
- 13 Labyrinth 7
- 14 Labyrinth 8

LABYRINTH FIVE



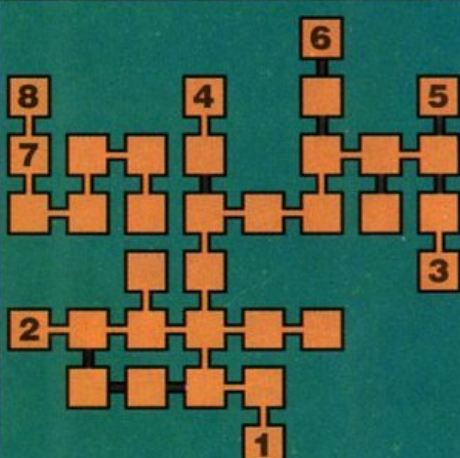
- 1 Start
- 2 Crystal Ball
- 3 Silver Sword
- 4 Key
- 5 Bombs
- 6 Medicine
- 7 Boss
- 8 Medallion

LABYRINTH SIX



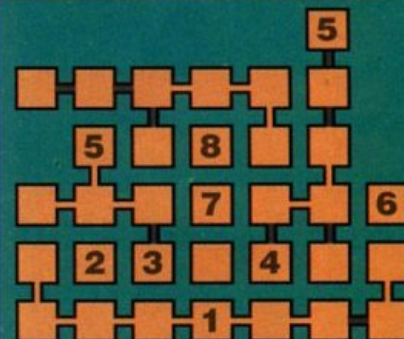
- 1 Start
- 2 Crystal Ball
- 3 Bronze Sword
- 4 Key
- 5 Bombs
- 6 Boss
- 7 Medallion

LABYRINTH SEVEN



- 1 Start
- 2 Crystal Ball
- 3 Strongest Shield
- 4 Key
- 5 Bombs
- 6 Medicine
- 7 Boss
- 8 Medallion

LABYRINTH EIGHT



- 1 Start
- 2 Crystal Ball
- 3 Bell of the Sky
- 4 Key
- 5 Bombs
- 6 Medicine
- 7 Boss
- 8 Medallion

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Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA
90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



by **Donn Nauert**



The bubbles in Stage 4 in the Skull Castle of Mega Man 2 are no lightweight obstacles for you.

Help! I really need advice on two games.

In [the NES version of] *Double Dragon*, is there a way to continue? In *Mega Man 2*, is there a way to destroy the bubbles on the wall of Stage 4 (in the skull castle) using something other than the crash weapon?

—Dennis Howath
Okotoks, Alberta, Canada

No, I'm sorry, there isn't a code that we're aware of that will allow continues in *Double Dragon*.

For *Mega Man 2*, you will need to use the crash weapon on the end boss. Make sure you have full use of both crash and Special Weapon 1. You should try to destroy the "bubbles." Start with the one on the left, and move to the one above that (at 11 o'clock). Then go to the one in the middle, and finally, go after either one on the right. Remember, don't use the crash to destroy the walls on the right. Use Weapon 1 to get out of these areas.

I read about *Tip Sheet* in the August 1990 issue and was wondering if you could help with a few games. First, how do you defeat Zang Zip's brother in *Ikari Warriors 2*? Next, where is Dracula and how do you use the crystals in *Simon's Quest*? And, finally, are there any 1-Ups or extra men in *Bionic Commando*?

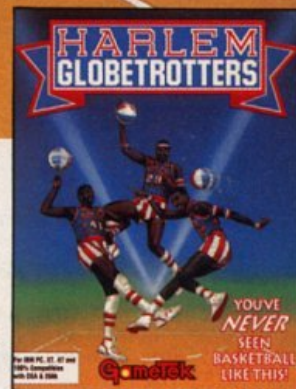
—T. Cohn
Petaluma, California

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A circular motion will help you successfully evade the exploding shots from Zang Zip's brother.

will reach Dracula's castle.

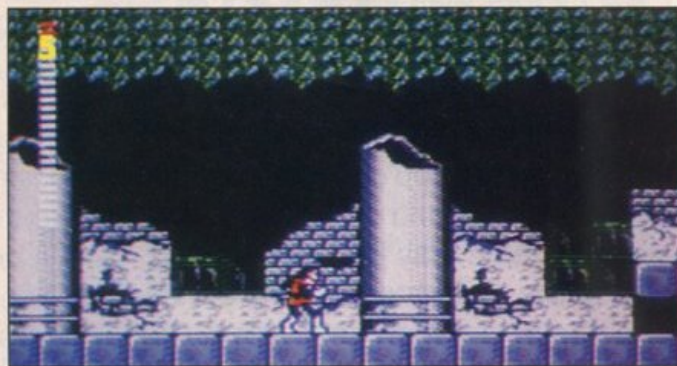
By the way, here are two other codes that will give you a second and third ending. (There is a black-and-white ending, a color ending and a color ending where Simon dies.) For the

for the last color ending, type in C1DF O26D L1KN SWJK.

You can continue on Ikari Warriors 2 by pressing A, B, B, A when you have lost all your energy. Press the buttons before "Game Over" appears on the screen. To kill the end boss, you must move in a circular motion while avoiding the explosive shots he fires at you. When fighting Zang Zip's brother you can continue only three times.

To find Dracula, you must go to Deborah's Cliff and kneel (you must have the red crystal). This will take you to the fourth mansion. From there, go to the right until you reach a staircase. Go down and right again until you reach the bridge. Use the holy water to destroy one of the blocks, then continue to the right, and you

first color ending, type in CTMV W26K R5KN SIBK;



Two passwords (1 and 2) for other endings in Simon's Quest and one color ending screen (3). Break the block with holy water (4) to get to Dracula's Castle (5).

In the game *Ultima Exodus*, when all of the characters in my party are on the fifth level, the king tells me to go find the "Mark of Kings." I have searched everywhere, but I can't find it.

There is also something about the "Mark of the Snake." Where is that?

—Ethan Brown

Knoxville, Tennessee

The easiest place to obtain the Mark of Kings is in the Cave of Gold, located up and to the right of Lord British's castle, on the first level.

The Mark of the Snake is located in the Cave of Sol, on the eighth level. If you make a map of the level, you will find it at approximately six o'clock. ♀

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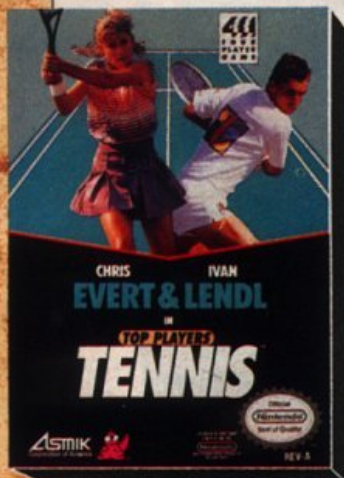
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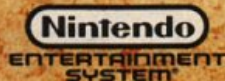
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ME

Presenting four new games by Asmik that will take you to worlds where adventure and challenge is not just an option, it's the law.

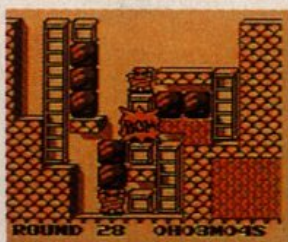
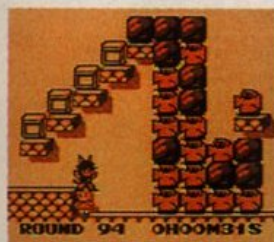
If you're tired of fighting the same small enemies, then return to the throne at the Crystal Palace. There you will find the evil Zaras in control. Zaras is the toughest, meanest enemy you will face on the NES. Zaras will prevail unless you, with the help of your dog Zap, master the ancient skills of Crystal Palace and discover the secrets in the epic action adventure—Conquest of the Crystal Palace.

COMING SOON



If these games aren't exactly up your alley, then there's Catrap, a unique labyrinth of complicated mazes and monsters that seems to go on forever. And if you manage to solve Catrap's puzzle, amaze your friends by designing your very own mazes for the labyrinth.

So, if you think you have the guts to play with us, then you know what you have to do. Face me.



Carmen Will Star on TV

The frequent query "Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?" will soon have a new answer: on television.

Brøderbund is working with two PBS stations, WGBH Boston and WQED Pittsburgh; to develop a game show based on the megahit detective-adventure geography game. The half-hour program should be ready to broadcast in the fall of 1991 as a weekday entertainment. The program will feature three in-studio teams who'll compete to answer geography questions and

WQED Pittsburgh has produced many science and nature programs, such as *National Geographic Specials*, *The Infinite Voyage* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

Ed Auer, president of Brøderbund, is understandably proud. "This is the first time a software character has been used as a basis for a television game program. The *Carmen Sandiego* series fits in naturally with public television. The game show tests viewers' knowledge of geography using a very entertaining format. I think television audiences will feel challenged to out-guess the contestants."

The *Carmen Sandiego* software series, introduced in 1985, has sold almost 2 million units to date. It teaches geography and history, as players chase computing's most famous thief and her gang all over the world and through time to recover stolen treasures.

Crime Wave Gets Update

Access Software really listens to what users and reviewers have to say! The

company paid careful attention to suggestions received and made several enhancements to their hit game *Crime Wave*.

The game (which was formerly keyboard-controlled) can now be played with a joystick/keyboard combination. In addition, Access added a save feature so that the game can be saved or loaded from almost any spot. Finally, *Crime Wave* has been made compatible with 80486 computers.

Updated disks are available from Access for no charge to current owners.

How Hot Is Too Hot?

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has the answer to an oft asked question about safe storage temperatures for disk-based software. Thanks go to Steve Solomon of Fuji Film Floppy Disks, who gave us an expert's advice to pass on to gamers:

"It's best to avoid extremes of heat and humidity for both the storage and usage of computer disks. Although sturdy and well-insulated by their protective jackets, disks are designed for use at normal temperatures: 3.5" disks operate best between 50 and 140°; 5.25" disks between 39 and 125°.

Both types of disks can handle a greater range when being stored, but don't let the temperature drop below -40 or above 125°." Solomon added, "And, for optimum performance, also avoid humidity levels above 80% or below 8%."

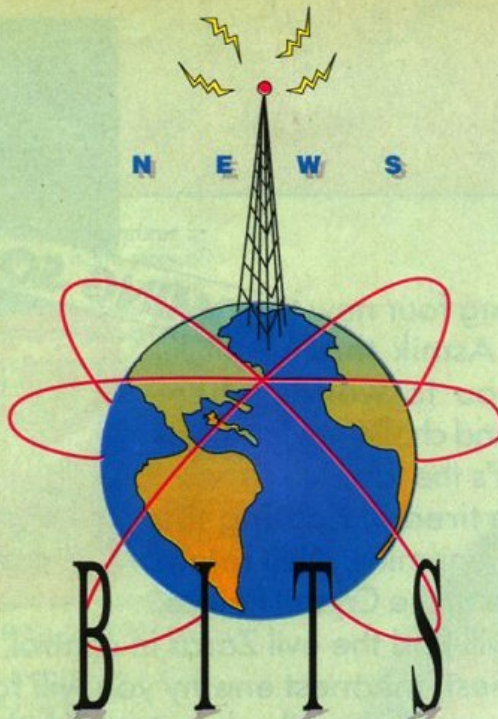
Company Offers Cartridge Services, New Uses for NES

American Video Entertainment (Fullerton, California; [714] 993-6659) has developed an alternate method for manufacturing NES game cartridges. According to company spokesman Phil Mikkelsen, the company now offers "a silicon solution to the [NES] security chip."

The company has a 131,072 x 8-bit CMOS ROM chip with embedded security circuitry or a separate security chip with any combination of ROM or static RAM. American Video offers its new service—which includes total turnkey board manufacturing, quick turnaround time and no restrictions on volumes or number of titles.

Mikkelsen also discussed alternate uses for the Nintendo Entertainment System. American Video is exploring the possibility of using cartridges to deliver advertising, public service and other messages.

"We no longer think of the NES as a toy," Mikkelsen said. "There are so many of these units in American homes, we are not considering them only as entertainment devices, but as appliances that can be used for many purposes."



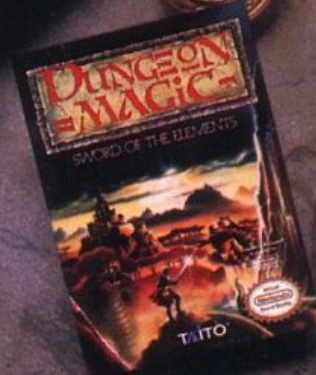
deduce the location of Carmen and exotic treasures.

The team creating the show has many television credits. Some of the programs created by WGBH Boston are *Frontline*, *Masterpiece Theatre*, *This Old House* and children's programs such as *Zoom!*

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You Don't Just Play It.
You Live It!

DUNGEON =MAGIC-

Finally, a fantasy role-playing adventure
that makes you a part of the action.



*Beware of the serpent's bite.
It is deadly. And you are
vulnerable.*



*Master the Magic. Cast wondrously
powerful spells. Create deadly
potions.*



*Choose your armor and weapons
wisely. Your enemy possesses the
power of 500 years of hatred and evil.*

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Acclaim Gifts Hospital With Games and Hardware

VG&CE salutes Acclaim Entertainment for outstanding community service. The software company was on the spot with help for the Childrens' Medical Center of the University Hospital at Stony Brook, New York, when they learned that the medical center needed games for the young patients.

"The Childrens' Medical Center has slowly been able to build a supply of toys, but has been unable to provide the most frequently asked for items—video games for the NES," explained Robert Holmes, Acclaim's president. Acclaim answered the need by donating a library of video games, as well as a Nintendo Control Deck, to the teaching hospital.

In addition, the company also donated Acclaim SuperPlay handheld electronic video games for children with restricted movement or those confined to their beds. Jill Partin, director of the Child Life Unit, was particularly happy to receive these entertainments.

As she explained, "Many children are restricted in their activity and must remain relatively stationary. Video games provide exciting entertainment without the children having to overexert themselves."

Florida Girl Wins Taito Sweepstakes

Shelby Logan of Mulberry, Florida, is the winner of the Taito *Wrath of the Black Manta* Sweepstakes. The 12-year-old was just one of approximately 750,000 callers who responded to the nationwide telephone sweepstakes. Logan's grand prize was a \$5,000 shopping spree in the store of her choice.

The sixth-grade, straight-A student chose to shop at Sears in the Lakeland Square Mall, a store she believes "has almost everything I could think of in one

place." Sears personnel issued her a special charge card for her 2 1/2 hour shopping expedition and followed her around with a flatbed dolly to hold all the merchandise she chose, which included a 12-speed



bike, stereo with CD, clothes, a cordless phone, gifts for her family and a favorite teacher and "armfuls of PC and [NES] software."

EA Expands Exchange Program

Electronic Arts has expanded its software-exchange program to include the Sega Genesis, to make it easier for disk owners to acquire games for their new system. Under terms of the "Software for Life" program, gamers who own an EA title for a personal computer can purchase the same game at half price when it becomes available for the Genesis.

Trip Hawkins, president of Electronic Arts, explained the reason for this exchange policy: "One of the biggest fears consumers have when purchasing software is that it will become obsolete should they decide to change systems. We want to eliminate that frustration."

Gamers who submit the back cover of the manual from the original software, plus half the price of the Genesis version, will get the new program without having to pay full retail price.

Customers can call (800) 245-4525 for information on ordering.

Top Coin-Ops of July 1990

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *G-LOC* by Sega
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *Smash T.V.* by Williams
5. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
6. *Mercs* by Capcom
7. *Final Lap* by Atari
8. *2-Dude Off Road* by Leland
9. *Off Road* by Leland
10. *Beast Busters* by SNK

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *Combatribes* by American Technos
3. *Cadash* by Taito
4. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
5. *Aliens* by Konami
6. *Air Buster* by Sharp Image
7. *MVP* by Sega
8. *D.J. Boy* by American Sammy
9. *Lightning Fighters* by Konami
10. *Golden Axe* by Sega

Best New Uprights

1. *Line of Fire* by Sega
2. *Winning Run* by Namco/Belam
3. *Thunderjaws* by Atari
4. *Sports Match* by Fabtek
5. *WGP* by Taito

Tengen First at Rent-to-Own

Tengen is now offering "Rent to Own" video games through video-tape rental stores so a gamer can see and play a game before actual purchase. The rental fee is then deducted from the purchase price. Tengen hopes this will open up the market and make it easier for retailers to handle their new product line.

Ted Hoff, Tengen's senior



vice-president of marketing and sales, stated, "We want to make Tengen games an integral part of the video-rental store. This program allows customers the opportunity to sample the games and make educated purchasing decisions while providing video-rental stores with a new source of revenue." Hoff also encouraged sampling, "We are confident that the quality of our titles will carry through to a sale even after two or three rentals of the game. If a title has terrific game play, a customer will purchase the game rather than rent it five or six times."

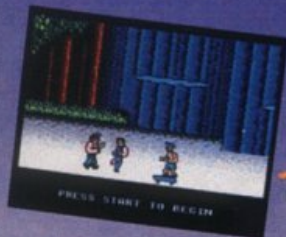
Tengen plans to advertise its rent-to-own video games similarly to the way

You've got the strength. You've got the moves. You are the weapon!

The bone-crushing sequel to the original smash arcade hit, *Renegade*.



Sound effects so real you can feel the punches.
A soundtrack so hot your ears will burn!



Put the brakes on the Skate Lords' boards.



Throw a wrench in the Sleazy Rider's motorcycle mayhem.



Face double-edge danger against the Dagger Dudes.



- More levels
- More screens
- More action



ACHILLES
All the charm of a used tire iron and a mean streak to back it up.



SISSY
Don't let those baby blues fool you. This woman's dangerous!



BIG BOB
Look at him wrong and he'll pummel you into oblivion.

Graphics so real their looks could kill!

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

it's done by the movie industry. All titles will have release and street dates, movie-style posters and point-of-purchase displays. Special dealer incentives and consumer-rebate programs will be initiated throughout the year.

Fractured Football Is King of New Coin-Snatcher

Bally Midway's latest play-for-pay game, *Pigskin 621 A.D.*, is a one- or two-player scrimmage between two barbarian teams. Loosely based on football, the game adds obstacles and traps never seen before on a gridiron, such as mud pits, trapdoors and concealed weapons.

It features 3-D graphics of two teams from the Dark Ages, and players can change team strategies. On offensive, players can send teammates for a pass or cause them to regroup around the carrier. Defensive strategies include "Man to Man," which

spreads out the defense, and "Get the Ball," which makes all the players scurry toward the pigskin.

Three action buttons and a 49-way joystick—that's right, 49!—control on-screen action, and there are two skill settings, regular and pro.

Air-Controller Gets Military Update

Wesson International (Austin, Texas; [512] 328-0100), manufacturer of *TRACON*, an air-traffic control simulator, will release a military version of the program. *RAPCON* lets home controllers handle military air traffic ranging from single-engine planes to F-111s to experimental stealth bombers. *RAPCON* not only reproduces the various aircraft and several military air facilities (including Edwards AFB and Miramar Naval Air Station); it also simulates airport surveillance radar and precision approach radar equipment.

RAPCON uses standard phraseology commands via keyboard and mouse, pop-up information windows that show aircraft silhouettes and specifications and wind and weather settings. Ground speed is displayed on the aircraft "data-tag." The program is available for IBM PC machines.

The company also has an update of *TRACON*. *TRACON II Multi-Player Air Traffic Control Simulator* randomly generates various aircraft

in the controller's sector, with a variety of approaches, pilot errors and other conflicts. Two players, via modem, can work separate, adjacent sectors, with one controller handling arrivals and departures and the other handling overall approach control. It simulates weather, pilots, storms, on-board emergencies and runway changes.

Tracon II can support a two-way linkup with up to 16 Microsoft *Flight Simulators*. The *Flight Simulator* aircraft show up on the *Tracon II* screen, and two-way digital communications between controller and pilot are supported. It's also been refitted with the Wesson Graphical User Interface that produces pull-down menus and pop-up dialogue boxes and can be, as an option, retro-fitted with a voice-recognition kit for two-way verbal communication.

Clue Book for Silver Blades

Strategic Simulations has completed a new clue book, for the game *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Secret of the Silver Blades*. It's a complete player's guide that includes maps of the entire game, detailed maps of every major location, locations and descriptions of all major encounters, magical treasures and specific tactics on how to defeat foes.

The cluebook also includes a checklist, so gamers won't miss anything important, information on which combinations of character classes and races work best and strategies for combat.

The book is available at most retail stores or by calling (800) 245-4525.

Lawrence Productions Signs With Brøderbund

Lawrence Productions (Galesburg, Michigan) has signed an affiliated-label agreement with Brøderbund. Under terms of the new arrangement, Brøder-

bund will distribute two of Lawrence Production's early learning titles, *McGee* and *Katie's Farm*.

The two programs, designed for children who can't read yet, use no words at all, so even the youngest computerists can run the programs using only the mouse. In both games, pictures across the bottom of the screen lead to different places to explore. The child simply clicks on the picture to get into a new area.

Brøderbund's spokespeople expressed their pride in acquiring the Lawrence titles, which now bring the Brøderbund early learning lineup total to three programs. (Brøderbund's own award-winning *The Playroom* is also designed for nonreading children.)

Quantum Promenade's New Online Service

Quantum Computer Services (Vienna, Virginia; [703] 448-8700) has introduced a new online service for the IBM PS/1. Promenade features a window system and menu options to provide education and entertainment over the modem connection.

"We developed Promenade based on what consumers said they were looking for in a new computer for the home, according to IBM's research," said Steve Case, executive vice-president of Quantum.

Educational resources were among the most prized, so Quantum is providing professional teachers with live online classes. To meet the requests for on-line entertainment, Promenade features multiplayer games with graphics and animation. There are also special-interest clubs, comedy routines, contests, game shows and other nightly events.

Promenade's library has over 7,000 software titles for single-step downloading. Online forums with software publishers and computer experts will pro-



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vide tips and answers to individual questions. Promenade also includes, among other services, an online casino and an electronic encyclopedia.

Quantum Computer Services was founded in 1985 and has three additional services for consumers: America Online (for Apple and Macintosh users), PC-Link (for IBM PC users) and Q-Link (for Commodore users).

Accolade Establishes New Hint Lines

Accolade has installed two new 24-hour hint lines for gamers who need help or advice. The first line, (900) 990-HINT, costs those with touch-tone phones 85¢ for the first minute and 60¢ for each additional minute and provides hints for *Les Manley In: Search for The King* and *Altered Destiny*.

Recorded inquiries are answered using the phone's buttons, so gamers can get hints and tips about any specific area of the game.

The second hint line is Accolade's bulletin board,

check for other Accolade information and leave questions about any Accolade game, which will be answered by technical support

representatives.

Accolade is also marketing clue books for *Search for The King* and *Altered Destiny*. For more information, call (800) 245-7744.

MicroProse to Nintendo-ize

MicroProse Software has signed a licensing agreement with Nintendo to create products for play on the Nintendo Entertainment System. The firm, well known for state-of-the-art computer software, will do its own design, programming, advertisement, packaging and distribution of its NES games.

"We see tremendous opportunity in this new market," said MicroProse President Bill Stealey. The company previously licensed the hit computer games *Silent Service* and *Pirates* to Konami for production on the NES format. Now that MicroProse will handle its own NES line, it expects substantial sales in the video-game arena.

MicroProse expects to have its first NES product, *F-15 Flight Eagle*, ready to ship in the fall of 1991.

Tiger Gets New Lair

Tiger Media, currently the leading CD software publisher, has moved to larger facilities because of the growth of its successful operations. The new headquarters, located at 5801 E. Slau-son Ave., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA, 90040; (213) 721-8282, is twice the size of the previous facility.

Tiger Media is the first software developer to publish and market a game for multimedia. *Airwave Adventure—The Case of*

the Cautious Condor, an interactive murder mystery, was introduced in Japan in 1989 for play on the Fujitsu FM/Towns multimedia computer. The game for Commodore's CDTV and two other multimedia systems will be available in the U.S. by the holiday season. (Multimedia systems incorporate various components, such as video, audio, laserdisc and traditional software.)

The company has developed "safe subset," the technical common denominator shared by all optical disc formats. Using this safe subset process, Tiger Media's designers can easily develop software for all optical-disc formats.

Laura Buddine, president and CEO of Tiger Media, explained what this means: "The new media market is in its infancy and has not determined a hardware winner. Any one of a number of formats, from CD-I to CD-ROM XA, could emerge as the standard new media format. We've found a way to

address them all equally without having to make fundamental changes in the basic program design." She went on to mention, "We can respond almost instantly to changes in optical-disc formats, without incurring tremendous development costs."

New Pins Introduced

This is the year of the pinball. New technology is creating games to make even the most exhausted arcaders dig in their pockets for more quarters.

Williams Electronics introduced *Diner*, a fast-food contest to serve five customers and light up the Dine-Time Jackpot for up to 12 million points. It fea-



tures the sights and sounds of a real diner, E-A-T lanes for bonus, a grill bonus and a cash register ramp for multiball play.

Bally/Midway's new pinball is an homage to skateboarding. *Radical* features



a vertical ramp—an open-sided challenge. Other difficulties for the pinballer to conquer are the Bust-a-Move Million Point Ramp, the Lip Slider Ramp and the Snake Run, which awards extra balls and mystery scoring possibilities. If players spell out R-A-D-I-C-A-L, they get to compete in a special skate or die multiball challenge, which makes scoring of up to 10 million points in a single shot possible. 1



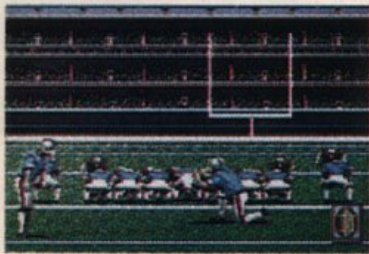
which is accessible via modem at (408) 296-8800. Gamers can get hints on the two graphic adventures,



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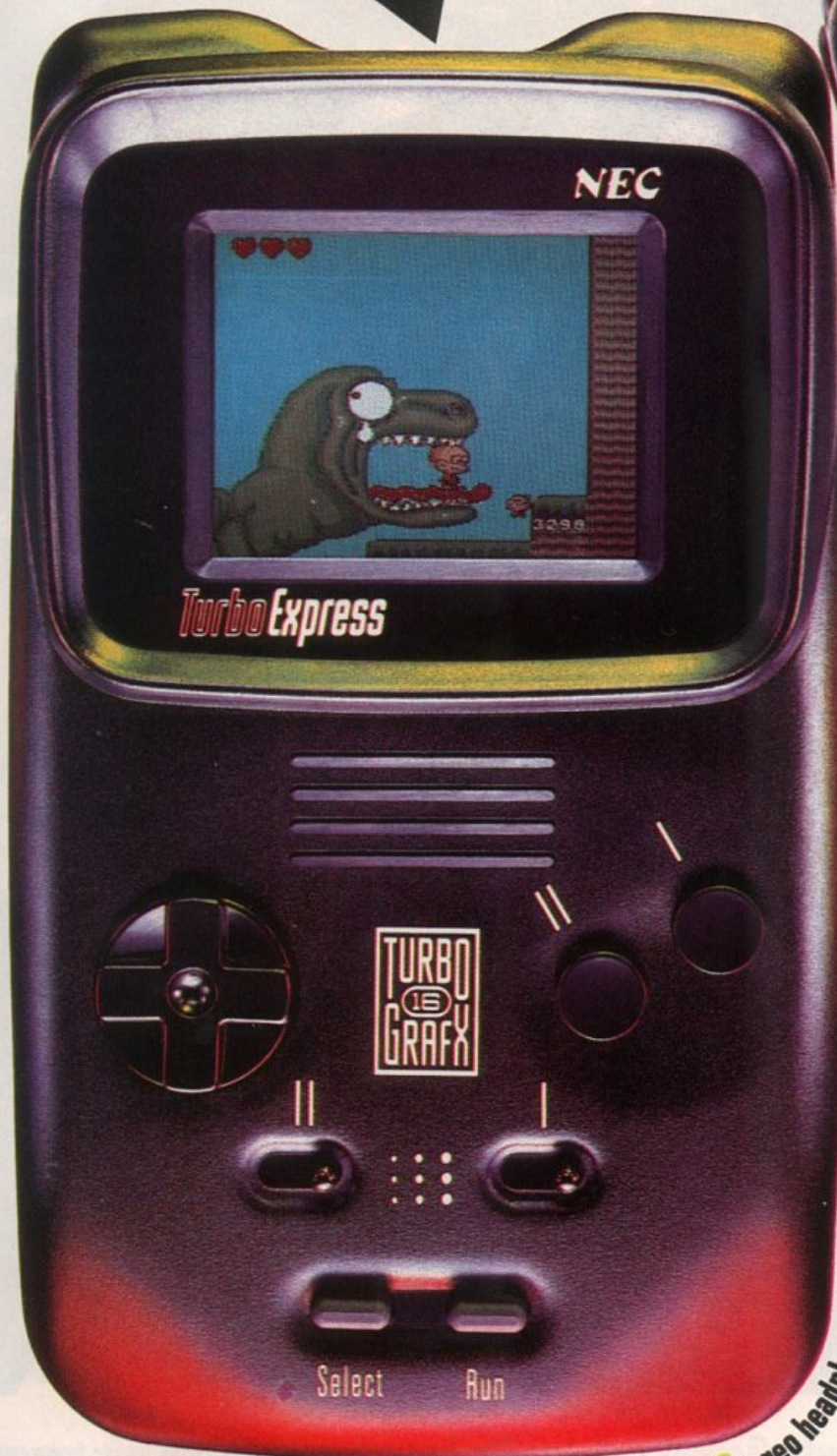


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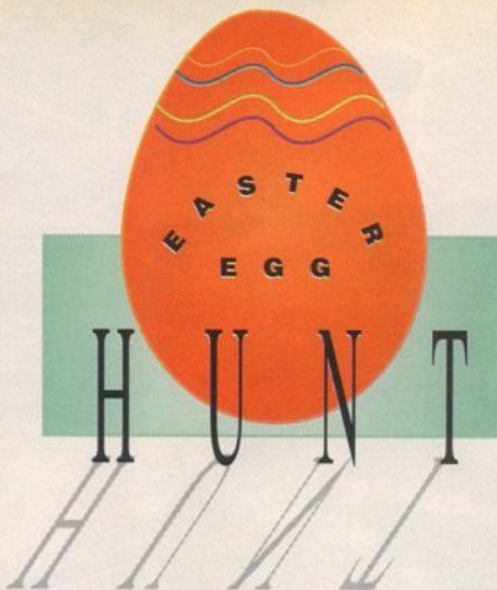
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Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

Dash Galaxy in the Alien Asylum

(Data East for the NES)



R. Stewart sent in a level select for this game. During the title screen, on Controller 1, press A, B, **SELECT**, U and L at the same time. The level select will appear at the bottom of the screen.



Neutopia

(Nintendo for the NES)



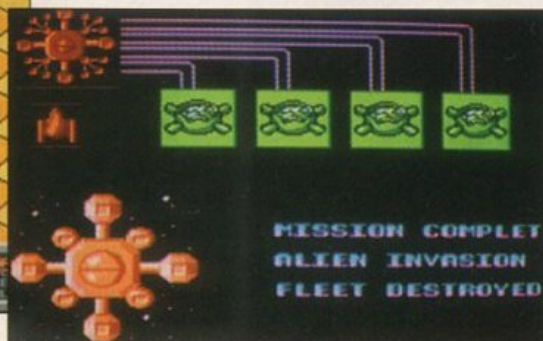
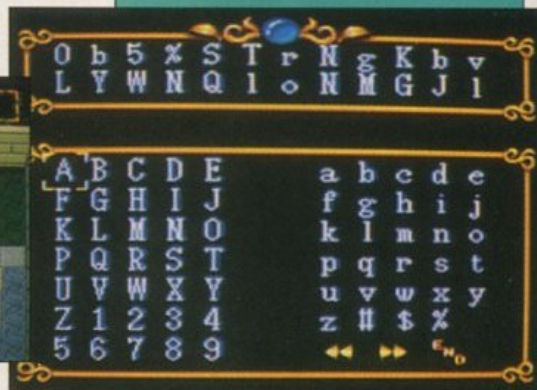
Using CompuServe, Dann Veldkamp sent in for *Neutopia*. Here's a code that will give you five medallions, but more importantly, 78 bombs. Type in
TQinHIUCDOQJ
l\$ZehVQJNAwI
(The first character in the second line is a lower-case "L," not the number one. The other two are capital "I"s.) Thanks, Dann.

Captain Skyhawk

(Milton Bradley for the NES)




David Mandl and Jason Bettiol of Larder Lake, Ontario, Canada, sent in a tip that will allow you to skip levels in the game. At any time during play, press the B button and U on Controller 2. This will automatically send you into the next mission, but will not work for the final alien boss. Great discovery, guys.



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Dragon Spirit

(NEC for the TG-16)



In *Dragon Spirit*, there are several places where you can bomb and have a special gel appear. The gel will give you invincibility, three-way directional control and make you small. Tom Handley of Hackettstown, New Jersey, has sent in the location of these gels. In Stage 7, after the section that contains all the spiders, there is a large block on the right side of the screen. If you can bomb the left part of the block in the very back, the gel will appear. In Stage 8, you can find the gel near the end right before you reach the spears that shoot out from the wall. When you reach this section, you have two paths you can take. Go to the left and bomb in the corner of the upside down "L". The gel will appear—grab it to help you past the spears and reach the final boss. Great finds, Tom.



NINJA GAIDEN II

Tecmo for the NES



Jay Holt of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has sent in ways to get three different sound tests. For the first, during the title screen, press and hold U, L, A, B and **SELECT**. You should see a cartoon drawing of Ryu. For the second sound test, allow the title screen to appear. As it fades, press **START** to make it appear again. Then press the same button procedure as above. You should see a cartoon drawing of Irene with a gun. For the final sound test, allow the title screen to appear. As it fades press the **START** button to make it reappear. Allow it to fade once more and press **START**. Now follow the directions for the first sound test. This time you'll see both Ryu and Irene—along with a new set of sounds. Thanks for the great eggs, Jay.



Chip's Challenge

(Atari for the Lynx)



In the last issue we printed a code (MAND) for a secret level (Level 145) in *Chip's Challenge*. Well, Doug Shannon of Sunnyvale, California, has another one. Level 34, called Cypher (using code NQFI), holds a secret. If you can draw a map of the level, you'll notice each room is a letter. The first two lines of letters tell us codes to other levels, while the third row, spelling JHEN, gives us the code for a secret level, Level 146. The manual claims there are only 144 levels, but the people at Atari say there are really 149. That gives three more levels to play with. Nice find, Doug.

continued on page 158

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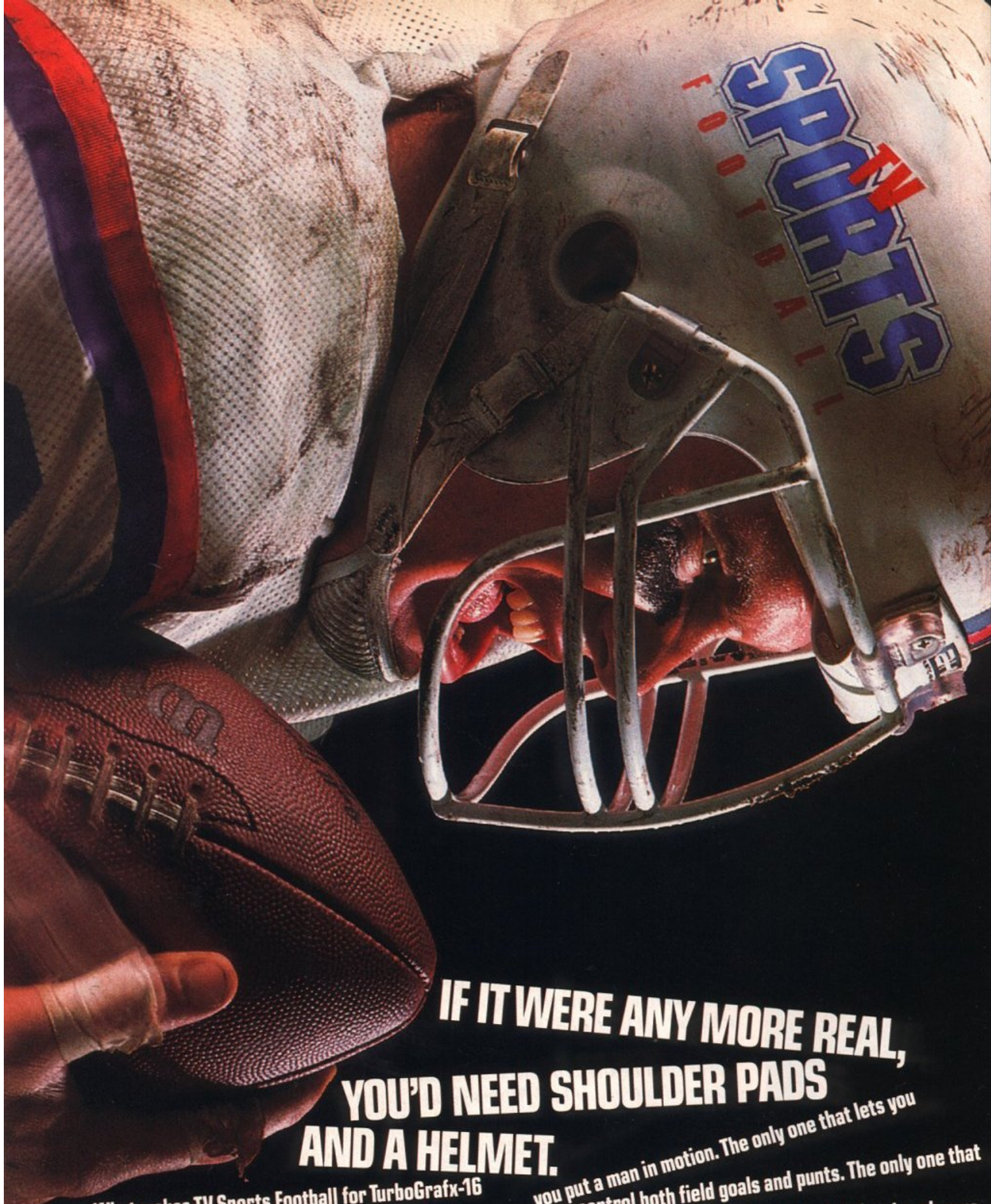
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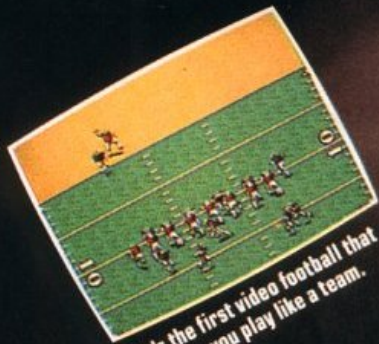
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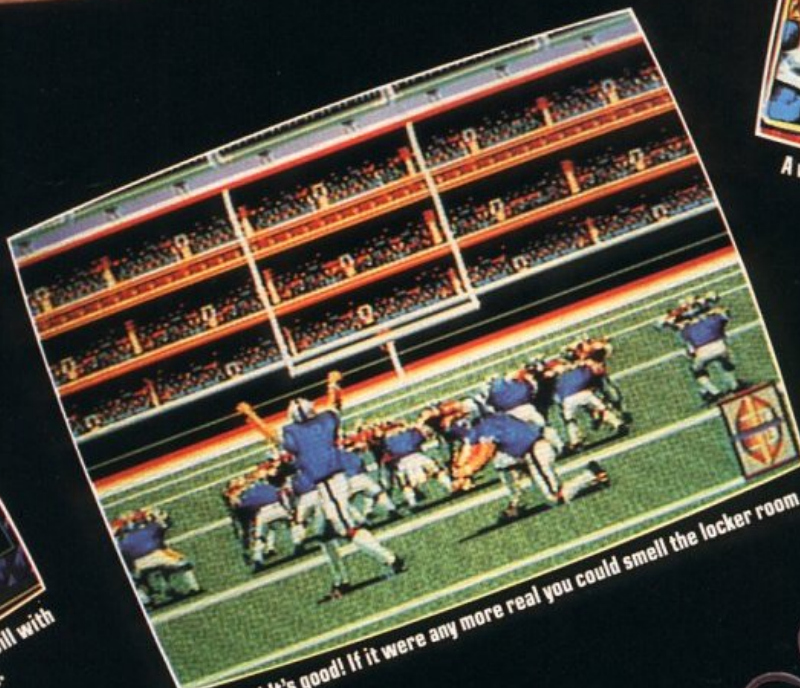
formation play.



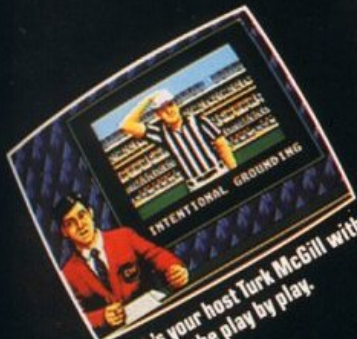
A winning season has many rewards.



First down 10 yards to



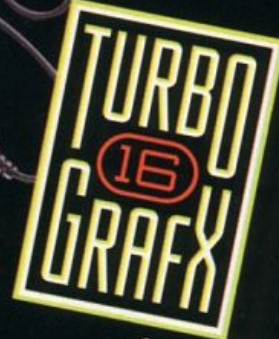
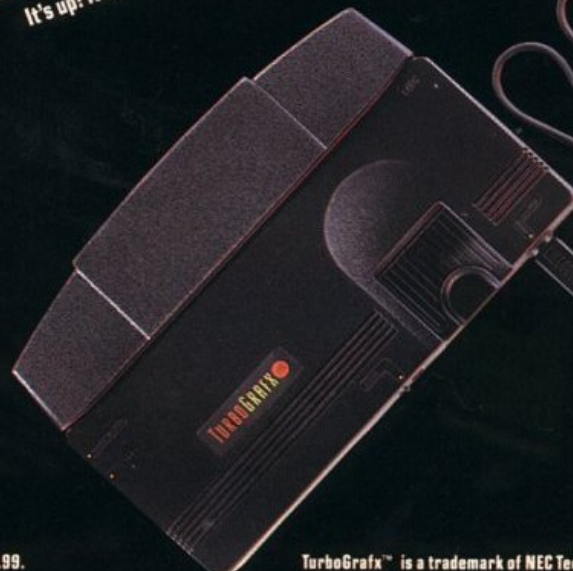
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Start-up Screen



Recruit Hero



Battle Map



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- 2) What famous gang defeated the evil minister Gao Qiu and restored peace to the Song Empire?
(a) Hole in the Wall Gang (b) Bandit Kings of Ancient China (c) Song of Four
- 3) What was the epic describing the power struggle at the end of China's second Han Dynasty called?
(a) Romance of the Three Kingdoms (b) I Ching (c) Godzilla
- 4) Who terrorized and almost succeeded in unifying Japan in the 16th Century?
(a) Cowabunga (b) Nobununaga Odo (c) Godzilla
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Every month (November 1990-February 1991) 40 winners will be randomly drawn from all entries having the correct answers. These winners will receive a KOEI Game Player's T-shirt (approx. retail value \$12). After all entries are received (postmarked no later than February 15) 50 more prizes will be awarded to winners randomly drawn from all entries having the correct answers. These winners will receive a KOEI Game, choice of title (approx. retail value \$65). One grand prize winner will be chosen and awarded Sony's HandiCam (approx. retail value \$1,000). Odds of winning depend on number of valid entries received. Judges decision is final. Not responsible for lost, late or misdirected, incomplete or illegible entries. Winners will be notified by mail. Total approximate retail value of all prizes \$5,000. Sweepstakes open to U.S. residents except employees and families of KOEI Corporation, Ltd. All prizes will be awarded. Limit one prize per household/family. No substitutions or cash equivalents. Taxes, if any, are the responsibility of winners. Sweepstakes void where prohibited, taxed or restricted. Winners agree to the use of their names and likenesses for publicity and advertising purposes without additional compensation or permission. For winners list, send a SASE to same address. Available after March 1, 1991.)

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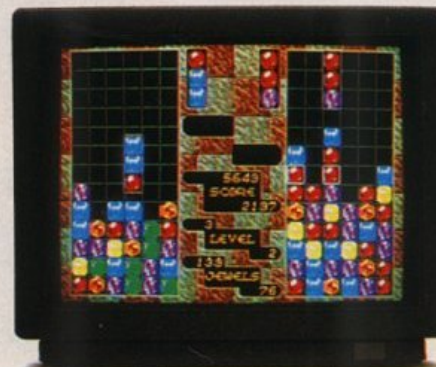
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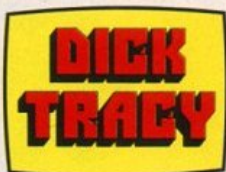
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CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Michael V. Katz
President
Consumer Products Division

August 1990

Dear Friends and Sega Game Players,

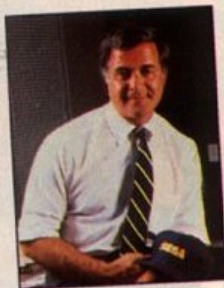
It is a very exciting time now at **Sega** and in the video-game industry. The number of video-game players is large and growing larger every day, and players are looking for the very best in video-game systems and state-of-the-art games. Large numbers of you are trading up to a 16-bit system with great graphics, superior animation and stereo sound capabilities. We are delighted that over 80% of 16-bit players have chosen the Sega Genesis System.

In order to provide the very best for our owners, we are offering a great selection of new games this year—over 40 new games in all for the Genesis. They include games only available from Sega. Games like *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker*, *Joe Montana Football*, *Pat Riley Basketball*, *Buster Douglas Boxing*, *Super Monaco Grand Prix*, *Vermillion* and many more—great games that you can't find on Nintendo or NEC.

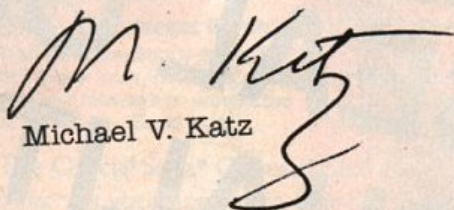
In addition, over 17 outstanding third-party software companies will be offering great games for the Sega Genesis System this Christmas—some of the top arcade games as well as great original games. They have earned the right to display the Genesis Seal of Quality. Our goal is to bring to you, the Sega player, a lineup that is second to none in quality and variety of game play.

Also, our original game system, the Sega Master System, now has a new look, a new popular price and offers its own selection of great new titles.

The 1990s is the era of the Sega generation, and we are thrilled to have you on the Sega team.



Sincerely,


Michael V. Katz

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**17 COMPANIES
HAVE EARNED
THE RIGHT TO
DISPLAY THIS SEAL.**

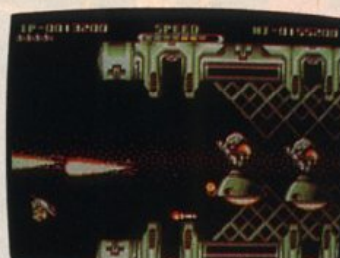




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Trash mutant life-forms and save the earth in this radical adventure!



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RENOVATION Whip Rush™
A horizontal and vertical scrolling game where you operate a mighty jet fighter and challenge seven stages of shooting scenes.



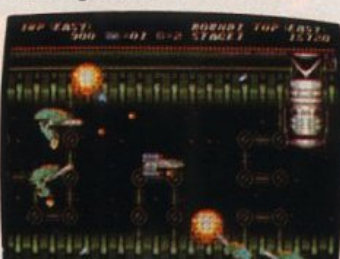
KYUGO TRADING CO., LTD. Cross Fire™
A shooting action game featuring helicopters in death-defying combat!



INTV CORPORATION Curse™
An intense shooter as you fly an attack craft through alien hazards to reach the ultimate goal—the quest of the Solar Grail!



KANEKO DJ Boy™
Rollerskate to action and win the ultimate street fight challenge.



SEISMIC Hell Fire™
Shoot or die in this horizontal scrolling shooting game.



SAGES CREATION Insector X™
Destroy insect worlds full of danger in this intense shooting game based upon the arcade hit.



TENGEN Klax™
Move fast and think faster in this strategic video challenge. Catch and arrange color tiles coming down conveyor belt—this is a scream!



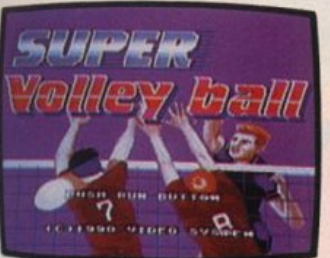
ACTIVISION Mondu's Fight Palace™
Role playing fun, hit music and great sound effects for 1 or 2 players—outrageous!



NAMCO Phelios™
Apollo challenges enemies to rescue Artemis in this arcade classic with vivid graphics and animation.



ELECTRONIC ARTS Populous™
Play God! Create the world or destroy it in a heartbeat. Control awesome natural disasters. The first game of its kind.



VIDEO SYSTEM Super Volleyball™
Total volleyball action that puts you in the game. Go for the spike—this is tournament play at its best!



DREAMWORKS Target Earth™
In this action space-fantasy game, Earth is under attack from an invading cyborg armada. Your mission is to protect the planet at all costs—Good Luck!



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You're a cop, detective and road warrior of the future. Your mission is to rid society of radical gangs of punks and thugs. Arm yourself and aim straight!



Technosoft Thunderforce III™
Rush into a world of perpetual motion and experience the line scroll function for the first time ever.



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NOVEMBER 1990



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LETTER FROM MICHAEL V. KATZ, PRESIDENT, CONSUMER PRODUCTS DIVISION, SEGA OF AMERICA, INC.



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GENESIS BUYER'S GUIDE

As we get closer to Christmas, lots of new Genesis games are coming out. Take a peek at our comprehensive listings, and see what titles from Sega and its 17 third-party licensees tickle your fancy.

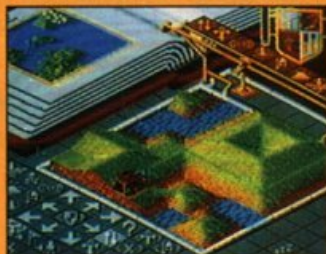


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THE GOD GAME: A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO POPULOUS

by Clayton Walnum

Electronic Arts has a big smash with this strategy game translated from the computer-game realm. Troubled gods can refer to our tips for successful colonizing.



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GENESIS VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS

The Sword of Vermillion, Buster Douglas Knock-Out Boxing, Whip Rush, Ka-Ge-Ki, E.S.W.A.T.—City Under Siege, Shadow Blasters and Columns



DEPARTMENTS

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EASTER EGG HUNT

As the Sega Genesis gains popularity and has more titles added to its library, more hints and tips are appearing. Here's a handful of Eggs that should keep you busy.

VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

The Sword of Vermilion

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$79.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

There's a feeling to *Vermilion*, a sort of atmosphere achieved by all of its elements, that makes it vanish as a game.

Instead, it becomes a living world of enchantment for the player to enter into. I suppose that almost all

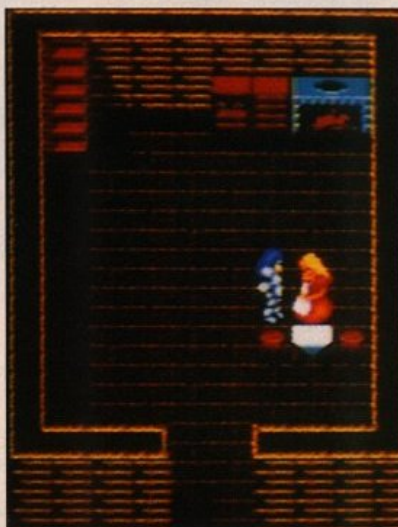
of the various role-playing adventure games for computer systems and game consoles try at the very least to accomplish this. Few, however, offer the opportunity to truly feel that you are at one with the character you are play-acting and the world you are moving within might be real, somewhere, sometime. The world of *Vermilion* is real to me.

Long ago, Edward the Third of Cartahena sent an invasion into Excalabria. Although Eric the Fifth of Excalabria and his people fought valiantly, they were overwhelmed and their national sovereignty destroyed—along with Eric's castle and the lives of his Royal family. Well, except for the young Prince.

As in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, when Merlin cannily sneaks young King Arthur through a gate to bring the young King up safely and in secret, so the warrior Blade acts on instructions from his King Eric to save the young Prince's life. They secretly flee the castle with the Ring of Wisdom, and now, when the game begins, it is 18 years after the evil Edward's invasion.

As the Prince, you start off in the village of Parma. At first all of the houses are closed to you, but you will soon discover one that is open. Entering there you will have a final, emotional meeting with

Erik the Fifth of Excalabria made a decision. Erik begged Blade. "Please escape with the little Prince and this Ring of Wisdom."



***Sword of Vermilion* doesn't have the usual cartoony look, instead exploiting the capabilities of the Genesis to the maximum.**

Blade, who will reveal to you both your ancestry and your destiny.

The Genesis graphics are used extremely well on these village scenes. The houses and walkways, fountains and animated people are all rendered in an overhead perspective. But it is the colors and the textures that the artists have achieved



from the Genesis palette that make these scenes so eye-catching. In a video game, graphics can often be "too cartoony" and, at the other end of the scale, too much strived-for realism can wind up simply looking faked. *Vermilion's* graphics tread this often slippery line and seldom stumble into either territory.

Because the resolution of the Genesis is so fine-grained, the small dots and shadings used to make bricks look like bricks and shingles look like shingles really do blend in both the physical and the mind's eye. It's a pleasing world to see, this *Vermilion*. But some of the denizens are far less than pleasing to meet.

The evil Edward's soldiers have turned into creatures who look and act as evil as their hearts. As you travel on your various quests, you will have to fight them many, many times. As you fight you will gain experience and receive golden coins called "kims." The experience will make your blows more telling; the golden coins will allow you to buy better armor, weapons and magic from the shops.

The mapping idea is unique. When you leave the village, there is a window to the side of the main display. This window shows you and a very small, circular area of the terrain that you are walking through. But if you have a map, that smaller window fills with all of the various terrain features, making it far easier to navi-

gate the mazelike twists and turnings of the road.

When you do meet one of the many fiends, you will quickly switch to one of the arcade-style combat screens. This screen is a three-dimensional representation of your character facing an onslaught of however many enemies he came upon. The control pad enables you to run in all directions, stand and hack with your sword. And, if you have the right magic, you can also use various spells to fight.

Although combat is exciting, I would like to have seen more options. All you really have are two moves—hacking and magic—and the ability to move around. This gets repetitive. I would dearly love to see *Vermilion's* designers tackle combat screens that would allow for some real thumb-twisting arcade movements with smoothly animated fighting shown on-screen (maybe in their next venture).

Another problem is that many times I found my character had been hurt and lost hit points, but the enemy who scored had not visually contacted the on-screen character. Other times, it seemed I was able to close in without damage. Because of this, combat is harder than it needs to be, but harder because of confusion rather than additional elements.

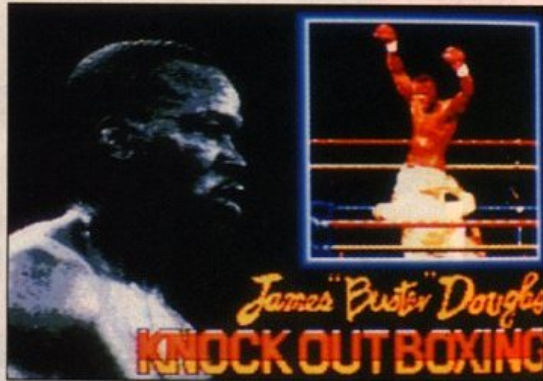
As you can see, *Vermilion* will provide many hours of play. Thanks to the built-in battery, there is a save-game feature that can be used at anytime you're on the road (but not in combat).

Vermilion will be compared by many people to *Phantasy Star II*—but it is really a very different type of game. To people familiar with computer games, this is more an *Ultima*-style adventure while *Phantasy Star* probably owes more of its genesis (no pun intended!) to the *Wizardry* genre.

Classic games don't come along every day—and that's what *Vermilion* is: a classic game that will provide you with days of adventuring value.

—Neil Shapiro

Sega of America
573 Forbes Blvd.
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(800) USA-SEGA



The fight scenes you see in *Buster Douglas Knock-Out Boxing* are reminiscent of television coverage of a ring battle.

Buster Douglas Knock-Out Boxing

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I remember when I was a kid watching boxing on the TV with my grandfather. Boxing was more popular then, and even though it was less respected than it is today, it was an exciting sport just as it is now. While some people in every generation may say that such fighting is somehow "uncivilized," many civilization's entertainment have included such staged fights.

So, I plugged in the *Buster Douglas* cartridge with a great deal of expectation. I hoped to be able to see some in-depth simulation of the strategy, the detail, the reflexes and the pure power of the sport. Well, in some ways, I must report that *Buster Douglas* was a bit of a disappointment to me.

At the beginning of the game, one chooses from five fighters to control. The fighters range from Dynamite Joe and King Jason, up to Buster Douglas himself. All the fighters have various reaches, weights and KO records that somewhat affect their performance. The player must fight his way through the other opponents in a series of championship bouts. Or, in a two-player game, each player may control a different fighter. There is also a "spectator" mode in which the Genesis will run each side while you sit back and watch.

Judging graphics is subjective—one man's masterpiece painting is another's I-wouldn't-have-it-for-wallpaper. Still, I think there are some objective reasons why the *Buster Douglas* graphics did not appeal to me. For one thing, the flesh tones are way off. They are ill-chosen as far as cartoon-style colorization and extremely garish if photorealism was the goal here. The figures are presented on-screen in so large a size that they take up as much TV screen space as would a broadcast on regular TV of two fighters. It seems obvious that the designers hoped for realism and used this size to help achieve that. But the realism is simply spoiled by the garishness of the figures.

Also, the animation is just not up to the size of the figures. While smaller figures



Buster Douglas is the sort of two-player game that would be very popular compared to longer, more complicated games—or even at a party to introduce new people to your Genesis.

would appear smoother in movement, the large size of these figures reveals all of the jerkiness and nonanatomical movements that they go through. The fighters are too big and bright for it not to be noticed—thus, all illusion is shattered.

Simply put, sound is almost nonexistent. Yes, there are muted crowd noises, sounds of blows and even a rather silly gloves-through-air sound. But the raucous cacophony of crowd and ring noises that make up a match have not been captured here—and I think the Genesis system is capable of that.

Control also disappointed me. I had just gotten away from the Genesis game *Budokan*, wherein I had learned a few trillion ways (it seemed) of moving the pad and holding the buttons to make on-screen characters do different things. Well, *Buster Douglas* is no *Budokan*.

Each arm is controlled by a button. Positions of the pad allow you to move forward and back while throwing straight punches, uppercuts and flurries. Crouching, dodging and blocking are also controllable.

I suppose that a case could be made that this, after all, is not karate, and such things as kicking, flying somersaults, hitting anywhere below the belt and such could not be simulated anyway. However, I would liked to have had the possibility to aim blows and ways to gauge and change their severity.

On the other hand, one thing the cartridge does well is simulate the timing of boxing. It's important to use the ol' right hand to get in some quick, softening-up blows to the head and body. Then you can move in with a roundhouse left or a quick uppercut to finish the job. Or, you can push your opponent onto the ropes (rope-a-video-dope!) and pummel them with flurry after flurry.

Each game is one round long and is timed on-screen. As a fighter takes damage, his strength bar graph at the bottom

of the screen goes down. No strength and the fighter crumples to the mat. The ref begins the long count. Will the fighter get up again?

If the fighter does rise once more, he will be at a reduced, damaged level. Blocks, dodging and crouching come into play here. At round's end, if both fighters are still standing, the game is decided by the referee based on the on-screen score that each player racked up following successful blows.

While I feel *Buster Douglas* has some problems as a one-player game, it's the sort of two-player game that would be very popular compared to sessions of longer, more complicated games—or even at a party to introduce new people to your Genesis. While the controls may be sparse they are intuitive, and fighting on-screen against another fighter controlled by the person next to you makes for a whole new sort of excitement.

Buster Douglas may not be the last word yet in boxing simulations. But, for now, those of us who enjoy "The Fight Game" will find that *Buster* does indeed impart some flashes of the excitement that has kept that sport alive for thousands of years into this age of video.

—N. S.

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Whip Rush RENOVATION

For the Sega Genesis (\$56.50)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Has anyone ever met an alien that they liked? Well, certainly not in the game of *Whip Rush* in the year 2222 AD! This game is a shoot-'em-up, a shoot-'em-

Renovation's Whip Rush will test your control-pad manipulation skills, leaving you with sore trigger fingers.



TM

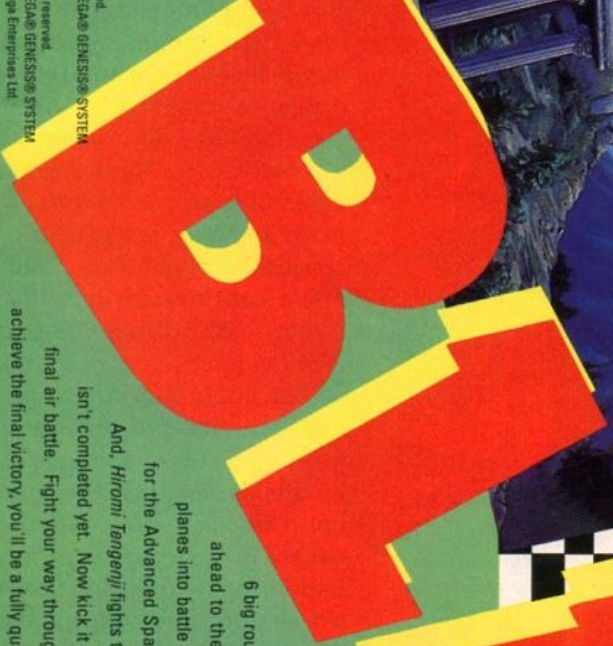
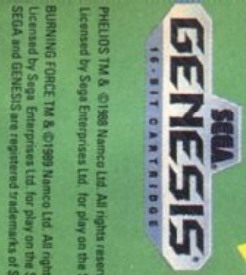


Phelios... The Sword of Light

You can choose novice or advanced mode! Mount your winged horse, *Pegasus*. The beautiful *Goddess Artemis* is kidnapped by *Typhon*, ruler of the Underworld. You're *Apollo*, the Sun God. Rescue *Artemis* by destroying evil powers. There's the snake-headed *Medusa*... *Graiae*, the three old hags who share one eye... and *Charybdis*, the sea monster guarding *Typhon's* fortress. Blast the *Golden Owls* and win Extra Powers like *Hyperspeed*, *Additional Firing Power* and -- most important of all -- *Phelios*, the *Sword of Light*. Use it to conquer *Typhon* in the 7th stage... and rescue *Artemis*.



TM



Burning Force... The Space Fighter

6 big rounds -- 21 areas in all! Arm your missiles and blast ahead to the year 2100 A.D. Fly your air bikes and fighter planes into battle with space age robots. It's the graduation test for the Advanced Space Combat course at the University of Earth. And, *Hiromi Tengenji* fights to pass her graduation exam. But, her mission isn't completed yet. Now kick it into overdrive and blast up into space for the final air battle. Fight your way through six rounds of non-stop action. When you achieve the final victory, you'll be a fully qualified Space Fighter.



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down and a shoot-'em-all-over extravaganza of sound, color, animation and challenging game play.

Three exploratory spaceships left our overpopulated solar system and, five years later, vanished after the brief transmission, "We are approaching the planet Voltegeus." Less than a week after that, the slimy old Voltegians arrived in a huge starship in the vicinity of Mars. But it was Earth they headed for, Earth they trained their blasters upon and Earth's finest who would have to rise to the challenge of defending their home world from this vicious attack. (The graphic prologue, by the way, is one of the best demos I have seen yet of the Genesis' storytelling power as a graphic medium.)

The game signs on with the ability to change options, such as difficulty, but even the easy levels are challenging. *Whip Rush* does not suffer from the disappointing wimp levels that some of the earlier carts had.

The first level is a side-scrolling potpourri of fast-moving excitement. As the Voltegians throw wave after wave of killer ships against you, the little fighter craft you control will weave in absolute response to your controls.



One button on the pad assigns the vessel's speed. As you speed up and slow down, a bar graph at the top of the screen shows how much speed you have put on. While I did not find it necessary to be constantly setting and resetting speed, it is still a very important control. There are some areas of *Whip Rush* that you will want to whip your way through in a rush of firing and maneuvering—but there are other areas where it is best to slow down and bide your time for the right moment to spring.

Another button is your fire button. It's sort of a thumb-burner, this fire button. Why you would ever want to move without holding the fire button down escapes me. Play *Whip Rush* for an hour, and your sore firing digit will know it! I would like to see the fire button designed as a toggle switch

Whip Rush offers outstanding graphics, featuring colorful screens that are detailed and complex, without getting confusing for the player.

(not just in this game but in all similar ones). Push once to start the stream of firing, push again to stop it.

The graphics are outstanding. While one or two Genesis arcade games suffer a bit from overkill, when the eye gets dazzled and confused just by the wealth of on-screen happenings, the designers of *Whip Rush* have made even the most active, colorful screens detailed and complex, but not overly confusing.

The player will not have to wonder if a little dot is an enemy missile or just something in the air. Let your reflexes take over completely here. The on-screen graphics allow that mysterious linkup of brain-direct-to-hand that the very best video arcades achieve.

Talk about needing to maneuver—wait until you see the second level. Here we meet up with an example of what you're up against in *Whip Rush*. Small craft pop up in front of you wearing shielding propellers in front that your fire bounces off. Suddenly, the indestructible propeller flies off at you, and you must control your fighter to quickly dodge. Then the propeller-shield boomerangs back to the fighter that fired it and threatens you from behind. Quick, circular motions are called for here.

Of course, picking up options will certainly help. As you fight you will find such options as missile firing, lasers and fireballs. Each revealed pick-me-up cycles through offering each of the preceding—but wait until it says "P" for power-up. As you pick up these things you get a second, smaller ship—called an option—attached to your mothership. You can even have a second such option for three ships on-screen at once—all firing the weapon of the moment. Even better, the options can be positioned using one of the control pad buttons so you can fire in almost all directions at once.

Whip Rush's sounds are very good. I know this is true because I routed them through my 100-watt per-channel stereo amplifier system, and even people in the family who like video games started yelling at me. There's always headphones.

Whip Rush is very much a Genesis-style arcade game, and you're going to want to have it on your cartridge shelf.

—N. S.

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DANDO

**Coming soon to
your Genesis
System!!! A
quest of steel,
sweat, and
guts!**

Not so far away on a gentle planet, in a distant galaxy, the sky came crashing down. A giant fireball had fallen in the Northern land, causing the countryside to grow dark and frightening. Something evil was moving across this land, engulfing it in Black Death.

The nemesis of long ago had returned. Ancient stories told of the reign of the evil god Dando, whose terrors and tortures were finally ended by the young warrior Muro.

The reign of darkness has begun again. If it is not stopped, Aurobia will be doomed for all eternity.

Ka-Ge-Ki

SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Genesis (\$55)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What can you say about a game called *Ka-Ge-Ki*? Why, even the name evokes images of...of...well, okay, maybe it doesn't evoke any images. But with a game called *Ka-Ge-Ki*, you know you're in for a few good rounds of...of...hey, what *is* *Ka-Ge-Ki*, anyway? I've played the game from start to finish and I'm still not sure.

Basically, *Ka-Ge-Ki* is an offbeat nine-round boxing match between a wide selection of computer-controlled opponents and a single player. But there's nothing very realistic about *Ka-Ge-Ki*'s boxing mechanics, so don't expect an authentic simulation. This is more of a jaunty cartoon than real boxing. (Incidentally, this review is based on a preproduction cart; it's likely that a few details of the game will change before release.)

The option screen allows you to choose two different configurations of your control pad, assigning the functions jump, jab and straight punch. You can also start at any given round, change the length of your life meter and choose the number of continues.

Rounds are played on successively higher levels of a skyscraper. Finish off the ninth level, and you'll be treated to a static view of a couple—ostensibly, you and the girl who roots you on throughout the game—standing on the roof, gazing down at a demolished city in the moonlight. Huh? How or why was the city demolished? I was disappointed in the lack of any sort of congratulatory screen or animation. After all, isn't that part of what we're playing for? For that pat-on-the-back scene that only we ace video gamers get to see?

The boxing itself was too easy, though I've been assured by the publisher that the difficulty is going to be greatly increased. That's good news, because I was able to defeat every opponent within a couple hours of booting the game. One reason it's so easy is that the computer automatically faces your character in the right direction, no matter how deftly your enemy circles you. Punching with short jabs is a good way to wear down your enemy and will

eventually knock him down. The straight punch requires a setup, but it's a devastating blow that'll almost always send the opponent sprawling. You can jump over your opponent, but without a shadow, it's tough to get a perspective on the jump.

Each character has a life meter, a line that shrinks with every knockdown. At the beginning of the game, the opponents all have much shorter life meters than yours; by the end of the game, that situation is reversed. Each level also begins with a couple of sparring partners with extremely short life meters just to give you a chance to "loosen up."

There's a fun, funky Japanese feel to the graphics. The characters are large, detailed and amusing—oversized heads

and all sorts of pained expressions. The backgrounds are colorful, but mostly floor—there's not too much to look at there. The music is cute and varied, with voice synthesis throughout: cheering crowds when you recover from a knockdown, a gobbledygook sound



In contrast to Sega's *Buster Douglas* game, Sage's Creation's *Ka-Ge-Ki* is an offbeat boxing match between a wide selection of computer-controlled pugilists and your fighter.



as an opponent shakes off your last punch, the 1-2-3 count and much more.

A two-player head-to-head option would have been a major improvement in *Ka-Ge-Ki*. The nine levels don't really offer enough variety to keep you entertained once you've completed the game. As it is, *Ka-Ge-Ki* will probably fill the bill if you enjoy punch-outs but don't care about the realism of a sophisticated boxing cart.

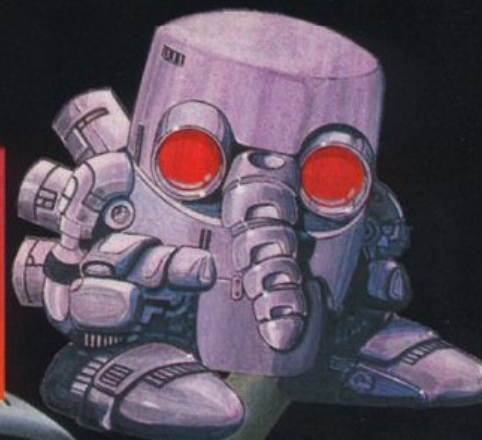
—Joshua Mandel

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(415) 292-6201

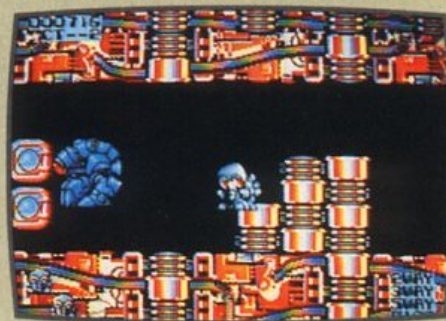
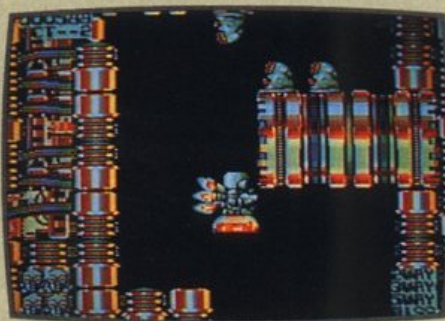
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CIRCLE #129 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

E-S.W.A.T.-City Under Siege

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

There are probably thousands of Genesis owners out there hoping that *RoboCop*, the arcade game, might see the light of day as a Genesis cart. There's no indication that that's going to happen, but take heart: *E-S.W.A.T.-City Under Siege* is close and delivers arcade-quality action. Moreover, like the masterpiece *Revenge of Shinobi*, not only does the game play exceedingly well, it does so with a high degree of graphic style rarely seen outside of the arcade.

E-S.W.A.T.'s plot is similar to the theme of *RoboCop* (without the corporate corruption): the government has decided to create an elite corps of gangbusters (the "Cyber Police") and arm them with robotic suits. The suits provide extraordinary powers: there's a jet pack, a basic gun and room for up to four more weapons. But you'll have to earn your *E-S.W.A.T.* stripes; the first two missions are played totally without benefit of the suit or extra weaponry.

Those first missions are a cakewalk, though, even in the hardest mode (there are three modes to choose from). The game escalates the difficulty in Mission 3, when you've got your suit and can start collecting weapons. In each mission, your life meter gets a little longer, and once you've got your cybersuit, you also get a "burner" meter. The burner meter refers to how much firepower you've got for your jetpack and the optional fire weapon. Fire weapons can only be used once and eat up all your burner power (which regenerates slowly by itself), but they're spectacular and incredibly destructive. The jet pack eats burner power more slowly.

While the suit gives you superior firepower, it can also be a hindrance. Kneeling, which will let you duck under most



Sega's *E-S.W.A.T.* will remind you of *RoboCop*, as you lead one of the elite corps of peace officers, called the Cyber Police, through the streets, battling crime along the way.

bullets and weapons in the training missions, will no longer be so useful; the cumbersome bulk of the suit leaves you in the line of fire.

The variety of locales and villains is wonderful. You go from the tops of buildings and skyscrapers (like the back streets of Tokyo in *Revenge of Shinobi*), to a multilevel cyber-

prison—where both guards and inmates are out to get you, for no apparent reason. There's a salute to Three Mile Island where you battle the boss at the summit of a cooling tower. There are immense mechanized installations and a mad wizard's lair that bubbles over with purple ooze and slithering green slime. As in most video games, the strategies required for each successive level get more and more complex.

The scenery shifts in multiple layers, giving a feeling of depth and realism that Genesis games are noted for. The sound effects and music make full use of stereo separation, and they're as good as any yet produced on the Genesis—rich, rumbling and appropriately pulse-quickening. The usual option menu allows you to control game difficulty, change the number of lives, configure the control pad buttons (attack, jump and weapon select) and preview all the music and sound effects.

My only complaint, a minor one, is that the game may be too short for top-notch arcade players. It seems that many Genesis games devote so much programming attention to graphics and sound that game length is shortchanged. *Revenge of Shinobi* proves that this needn't be the case. On the other hand, the Genesis seems to attract great numbers of outrageously skilled players, so it's hard for any game to satisfy their voracious appetites. *E-S.W.A.T.* is such an extravaganza that I'd recommend it even for those players, though they may want to start the game in the toughest mode to ensure a lengthy challenge.

—J. M.

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CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

FINAL ZONE



Shadow Blasters

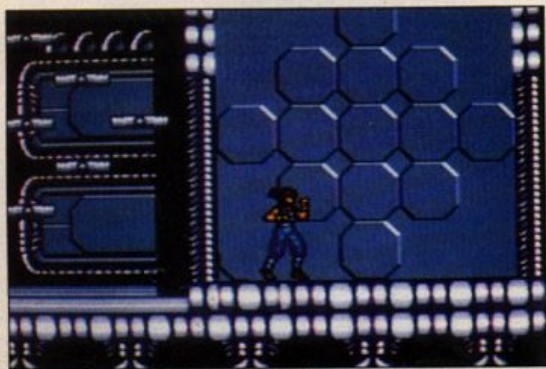
SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Shadow Blasters is the first of its kind for the Genesis: a two-person scrolling action adventure with role-playing elements. Yes, there's a little bit of everything in this game, including a lot of atmosphere, some awesome graphics and a few real surprises of the "just when you thought the game was over..." variety.

Although two players can play at the same time, there are actually four characters total. Before the game begins, you select a difficulty mode, configure your buttons and choose a one- or two-player game. Each player has a choice of one male character and one female character; each character has a special power—lightning, fire, ninja magic or wind. Once the two characters are chosen, you're given a



Shadow Blasters, from Sage's Creation, is the first of its kind: a two-person scrolling action adventure with a bit of RPG thrown in for good measure.

menu of six locales, which can be finished in any order. Each locale must be "cleared"; that is, you must find your way through to the boss area and defeat the local boss.

Defeating various creatures will sometimes net a flame. You can determine what sort of power-up it is from the color of the flame: Some help restore your life meter by a notch or more, some increase your jumping ability and still others increase your attack ability. Thus, you'll increase in

defensive and offensive power as you go along, which is fortunate, since the bosses in this game are *mean*! If one of the characters dies, you can replace it with one of the unused characters from the opening menu. If you're playing solo, you can play through all four characters before the game ends.

Getting through the various locales isn't difficult. But once you've cleared all six, you progress to a new, unlabeled area, much tougher than any of the other six. Finish that area and you're *still* not through—not by a long shot! The game literally has endings on its endings, concluding with a beautiful outer space battle sequence that bears no resemblance to anything preceding it.

The game has a mix of uninspired and breathtaking graphics. The characters you control are small and not especially well-animated. Some of the powers (particularly wind, which at full power is supposed to represent a small tornado) are bland and uninteresting.

The bosses are enormous and beautifully drawn—some of them are three-quarters the height of the screen; even so, there's not a flicker in the game. And though it sounds trite, the explosions when you defeat the bosses are terrific!

The multilevel backgrounds get progressively more captivating; one involves an Egyptian structure against a background of swiftly moving sunlit clouds. It looks at least seven levels deep and creates an incredible sense of 3-D—somewhat like the Lava Lake in *Mystic Defender* or the parallax ground effect in *Space Harrier II*. The final battle in space is also wonderfully three dimensional.

The music in *Shadow Blasters* is also reminiscent of *Mystic Defender*: atmospheric, heavy, almost depressing. The themes are nicely woven into the game, so while the music isn't particularly impressive, and the stereo effect isn't very pronounced, it is varied and stylish. Sound effects were adequate but not spectacular. Parts of the game seem to demand voice synthesis; it's a pity that there is none.

I found *Shadow Blasters* fairly difficult, but the game has unlimited continues in both normal and difficult modes. This might make the game seem too easy for skilled finger-flingers, but nobody's forcing you to use those continues! The real fun—and the biggest challenge—comes

continued on page GEN-24

beatdown



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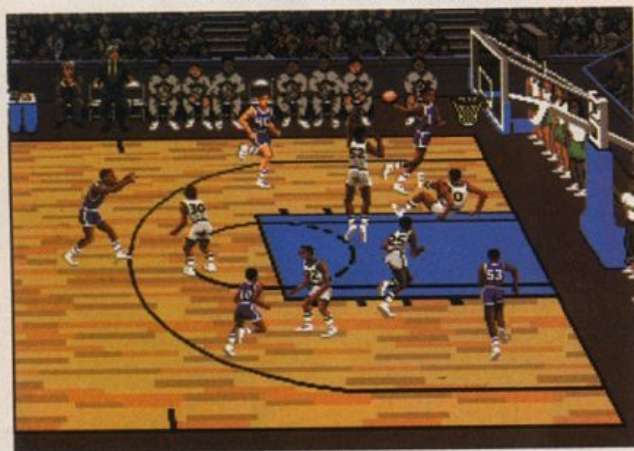
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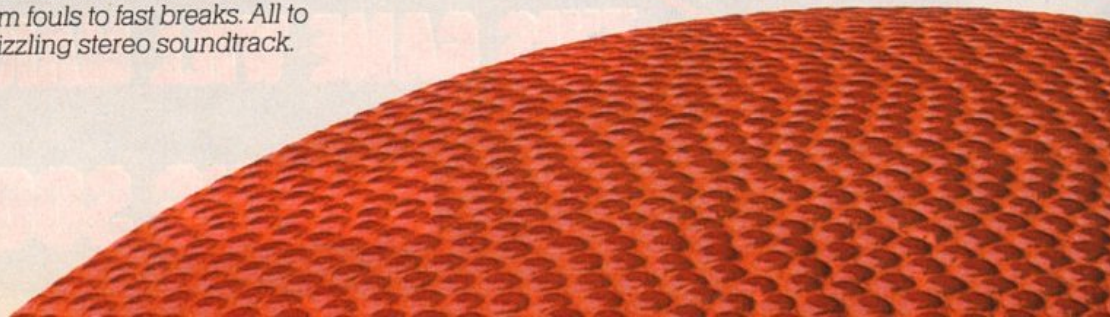
In other words, action as big and intense as basketball itself. Big sound. Intense graphics. Killer animation. For one or two players.

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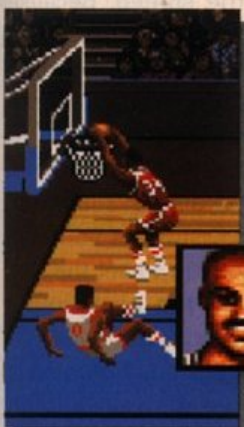




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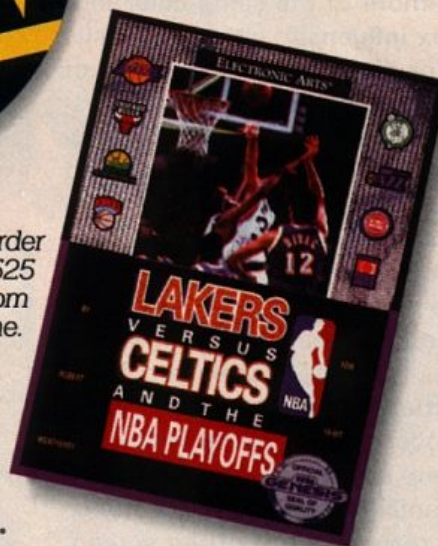
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from playing the two-player game and having all four characters alive at the conclusion.

—J. M.

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(415) 292-6201

Columns

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Two of the most popular puzzle games these days are *Tetris* and *Klax*. Wanting a similar contest for the Genesis, Sega has taken the themes from both of these successful titles, combined them and come up with *Columns*, a colorful and intriguing game of strategy—and, of course, a guaranteed hit.



In *Columns*, the player maneuvers columns of colored crystals and tries to get three or more of the same color in a row (the *Klax* influence), either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. When a row of three or more has been formed, the crystals in the row disappear, and those above, if any, settle to fill in the vacated spaces.

Like *Tetris*, the crystals drop from the top of the screen into a rectangular container. Three crystals, arranged vertically, fall at one time. Although you can switch their order as they fall, as well as maneuver them left and right, once the crystals settle into place, they cannot be moved.

As you rack up points, the crystals fall faster. The container fills quickly, and once the crystals reach the top of the screen, the game is over. After a while, even on the easier levels, the crystals drop so quickly that you barely have time to move

If you're looking for a brain-teasing game for the Genesis, look no farther than Columns, a game that uses Tetris as an inspiration without duplicating it.



them left or right, let alone rearrange their order.

Columns is deceptively simple—a snap to learn, but a bear to master. The more you play, the more strategies you discover. Soon, you'll not only learn to place crystals where

they'll immediately score points, but also where they'll set you up for future coups. For example, constructing many pairs may eventually cause a "chain reaction," where the removal of one set of crystals causes the crystals above to drop into more rows of three. With a little planning, you can score half a dozen or more times with a single column of crystals, as one row after another vanishes from the screen.

In Flash Columns, a variation of the main game, you must try to remove a flashing crystal from the screen. Because the flashing crystal is buried, you must plan carefully, removing the crystals above it. In this version of the game, your score is based on the time required to remove the target crystal.

A two-player game is also available, as is the original arcade version. In addition, an option screen allows you to set the skill level, the starting level, the background music and other game attributes.

As you may have guessed, *Columns* is not a graphics-intensive game. Still, the game screen is attractive—the colors vivid and the few animations stunning. Although limited in choice, the music is also excellent, and the sound track has a decidedly Baroque feel. Classy stuff!

If you're a fan of arcade-action titles and are impatient with puzzle games, you may not care for *Columns*. However, if you've been dying to lay your hands on a *Tetris*-type game for your Genesis, you'll be delighted with this one.

—Clayton Walnum

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Don't think you can get out alive with blinding firepower alone, you'll need to utilize your four weapons with strategy and great prowess!

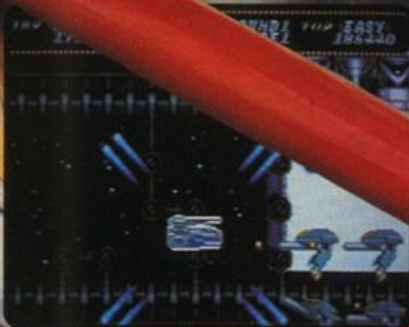
Complete with 4 Mbit ROM, 6 Levels, Continue, Selectable Firing Direction, Multiple Endings and 16-Bit Graphics.

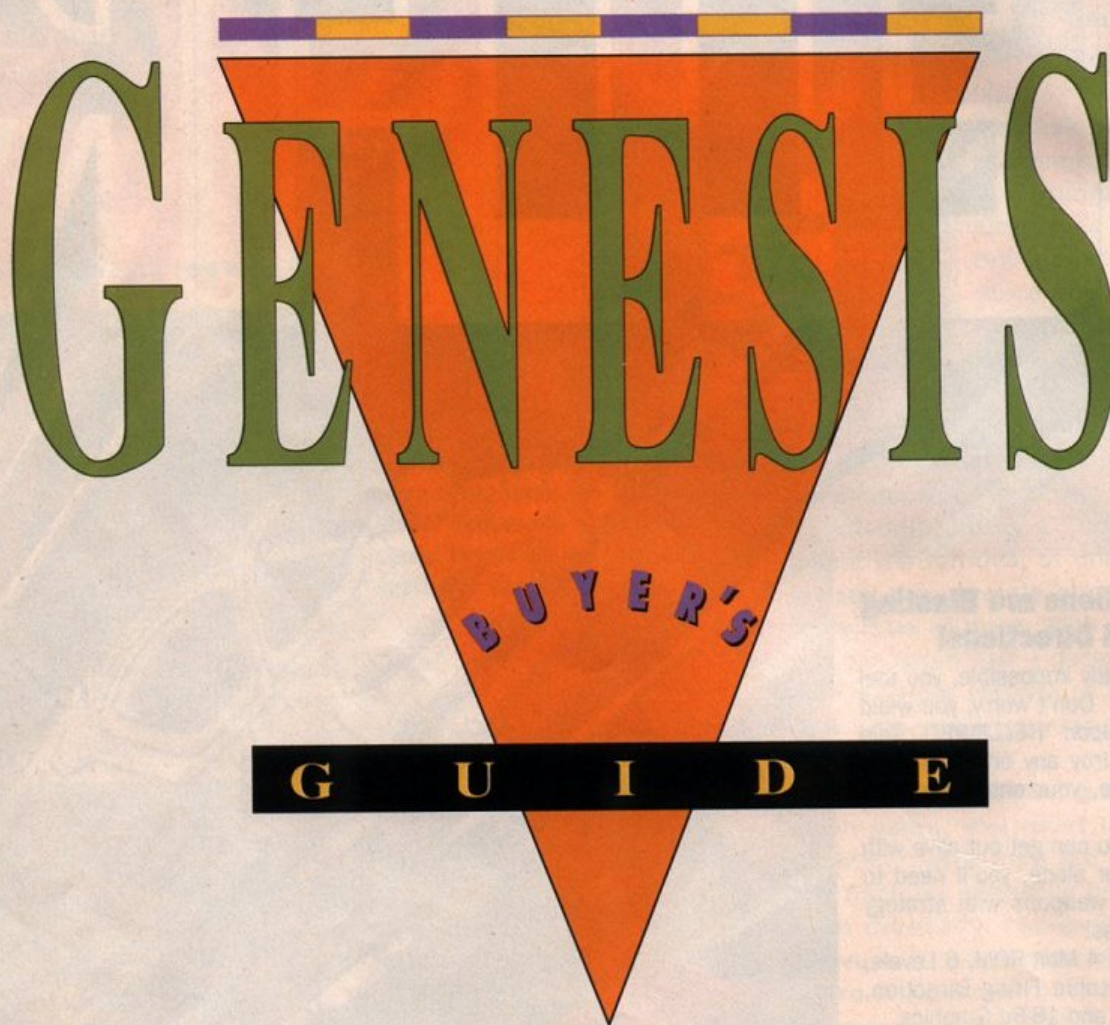
At least you'll look good as you go down in flames!

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GENESIS

BUYER'S

GUIDE

The 16-bit generation is here, there's no doubt about it!

Since its introduction to America in August 1989, the Sega Genesis has done quite well, with hundreds of thousands of video gamers buying, upgrading to or adding the Genesis to their collection of hardware.

Similarly, many of the cartridges are knocking the socks off of the players, from the space adventures of *Thunder Force II* to the martial-arts combat of *Last Battle* and *Revenge of Shinobi* to the sideline excitement of such sports games as *Tommy Lasorda Baseball* and *Pat Riley Basketball*.

And there's lots more to come. What follows is

VG&CE's Genesis Buyer's Guide. It's by no means complete in its listings, as things are constantly changing in the software-development biz. Also, we tried to keep games that you won't see for a long while off the list, otherwise you'll feel teased and have to wait in anxious anticipation for the cartridge's appearance on your store shelves. This buyer's guide captures a small chunk of the Genesis software market, a gathering of games that are just coming out or will shortly be shipping to stores.

As we said, the 16-bit market is coming on like gangbusters, and we hope our preview will satisfy your curiosity for new software. Enjoy.

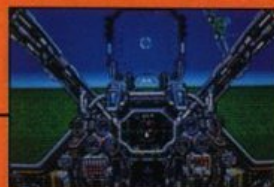
AERO BLASTER (KANEKO SEISAKUSHO)

CAN YOU SAVE THE EARTH FROM CERTAIN DISASTER AT THE HANDS OF THE VICIOUS ALIEN ATTACKERS? YOU'D BETTER BE AT YOUR COMBAT BEST IN ORDER TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE ENEMY ONSLAUGHT, WHICH FEATURES GIGANTIC FLYING BATTLE CRAFT. THE GRAPHICS ON THIS ONE ARE WILD AS YOU CRUISE FROM ROUND TO ROUND.



AIR DIVER (SEISMIC)

A COCKPIT-PERSPECTIVE AERIAL SHOOTING GAME THAT PITS YOU AND YOUR HIGH-TECH F-119 STEALTH FIGHTER AGAINST A SECRET TERRORIST GROUP THAT LAUNCHES SCADS OF ENEMY PILOTS AND SUPERSHIP END BOSSSES INTO THE SKIES. BARREL ROLLS, MISSILES, CANNONS AND YOUR PILOTING SKILL ARE ALL THAT STAND BETWEEN SUCCESS OR FAILURE. CAN YOU DEFEAT THEM?



ATOMIC ROBO-KID (TRECO)

MUTANTS HAVE ATTACKED EARTH, AND ATOMIC ROBO-KID IS THE ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION. AS YOU GUIDE HIM THROUGH HIS TREK, CERTAIN ENEMIES WILL LEAVE BEHIND VARIOUS WEAPONS TO ADD TO THE KID'S ARSENAL, SUCH AS TWO-WAY, THREE-WAY AND FIVE-WAY SHOTS, MISSILES AND MUCH MORE. THIS SCROLLING BATTLE WILL TEST YOUR CONTROL PAD EXPERTISE.



BATTLE MISSION (RENOVATION PRODUCTS)

AS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF A VIOLENT STORM, FIRST LIEUTENANT GREG "SKIP" SAUNDERS FINDS HIMSELF ADRIFT ON THE BATTLESHIP *LIBERTY* FOR WEEKS BEFORE HE FINALLY SPOTS AN ISLAND. UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY. IN THIS FIRST-PERSON GAME, YOU MUST GUIDE SAUNDERS THROUGH ENEMY-INFESTED JUNGLES AND CAMPS AS YOU TRY TO REACH THE AIRFIELD, WHERE YOUR BATTLE HAS JUST BEGUN AS YOU TRY TO COMMANDEER A PLANE AND FLY TO SAFETY.



BEANBALL BENNY (NUVISION)

CARTOONY ADVENTURE COMES TO THE GENESIS, AS YOU MOVE BENNY, A TAXI DRIVER AND EX-PITCHER, OVER, UNDER AND THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY. HIS ONLY WEAPON AGAINST THE PACK OF CRIMINALS IS HIS ERRATIC BEANBALL, WHICH HE USES TO KNOCK OUT HIS OPPONENTS. THE ACTION GETS EVEN CRAZIER WHEN BENNY TAKES TO HIS CAB, WHERE HE CAN UNLEASH A FEW MORE TRICKS.



BIMINI RUN (NUVISION)

KINJI OHARA LOVES TO RACE HIS HIGH-SPEED BOAT AROUND THE OCEAN, BUT FUN ISN'T ON HIS MIND NOW. HE'S GOT TO HOP FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND TO FIND OUT WHO'S KIDNAPPED HIS SISTER. HIS ADVENTURE WILL ALSO LEAD TO A BAND OF CRIMINALS WHO ARE PLANNING TO DISRUPT THINGS WITH AN ELECTRONIC BEHAVIOR-MODIFICATION DEVICE.



BUDOKAN (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

MARTIAL ARTS IS THE THEME OF THIS POPULAR COMPUTER GAME BROUGHT OVER TO THE GENESIS. YOU'LL START OUT TRAINING IN THE VARIOUS DISCIPLINES, THEN ADVANCE TO THE TOURNAMENT RING TO TAKE ON A SERIES OF ADVERSARIES, MANY OF WHOM ARE SKILLED WITH DIFFERENT WEAPONS. YOUR *SENSEI* (MASTER) WILL ASSIST YOU WITH ADVICE, BUT IT'S YOUR SKILL THAT WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF HARM.



BURNING FORCE (NAMCO)

ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR 2100 A.D., THE UNIVERSITY OF EARTH WAS DESIGNED TO HELP TEACH COMBATANTS HOW TO SURVIVE THE SPACE AGE. ENROLLED IN THE ADVANCED SPACE COURSE, HIROMI TENGENJI MUST NOW PASS HER FINAL EXAM TO GRADUATE, BY BATTLING SPACE-AGE ROBOTS IN THE PRAIRIES AND DESERTS OF PLANET EARTH, IN ORDER TO REACH THE SIXTH AND FINAL PART OF THE EXAM IN SPACE. WILL SHE EARN THE TITLE OF "SPACE FIGHTER" IN THIS PASS/FAIL CLASS?



BUSTER DOUGLAS KNOCKOUT BOXING (SEGA)

ARE YOU READY TO PUT THE GLOVES ON AND TAKE ON ALL CHALLENGERS? YOU'D BETTER BE, AS SEGA PRESENTS ITS FIRST BOXING GAME. IT JUST HAPPENS TO CARRY THE NAME OF THE FIRST PERSON TO KNOCK MIKE TYSON TO THE MAT: JAMES "BUSTER" DOUGLAS.



COLUMNS (SEGA)

PUZZLE GAMES ARE IN, AND *COLUMNS* IS BOUND TO BE ONE OF THE HOTTEST OF 1990. YOU'VE GOT A SERIES OF JEWELS THAT DROP FROM THE TOP OF THE SCREEN, *TETRIS*-STYLE, AND IT'S YOUR JOB TO PLACE THEM SO AS TO CREATE MATCHING DIAGONALS, ROWS AND COLUMNS. IT'S INTENSE.



CROSSFIRE (KYUGO TRADING CO., LTD.)

TAKE THE CONTROLS OF A HEAVILY ARMED ATTACK COPTER AND MANEUVER THROUGH THE ONSLAUGHT OF ENEMY BULLETS AND AIRCRAFT AS YOU ATTEMPT TO TAKE OUT THEIR GROUND BASES IN THIS VERTICALLY SCROLLING SHOOTER.



CURSE (INTV)

SUBTITLED *THE QUEST OF THE SOLAR GRAIL*, THIS SCROLLING BLASTATHON WILL PIT YOU AND YOUR FIGHTER PLANE AGAINST A PLETHORA OF OTHERWORLDLY CREATURES. THOUGH YOU CAN ACQUIRE POWER-UPS ALONG THE WAY, YOU'LL HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL WITH THE ENEMIES AND, PARTICULARLY, WITH THE MASSIVE END BOSSES, ON YOUR WAY TO DEFEAT MEDULLA.



DANDO (TRECO)

LONG AGO, ON A SMALL GENTLE PLANET IN A GALAXY NOT FAR FROM HERE, THE EVIL GOD DANDO SPREAD TERROR ACROSS THE LAND, ENGULFING IT IN A BLACK DEATH. ANCIENT STORIES TELL OF DANDO'S REIGN AND OF HOW A BRAVE YOUNG WARRIOR NAMED MURO WAS ABLE TO DEFEAT HIM. BUT NOW THE LAND IS GROWING DARK AGAIN, AND IF IT'S NOT STOPPED SOON THE PLANET WILL BE IN DANDO'S CONTROL FOREVER.



DICK TRACY (SEGA)

YOU'VE READ THE COMIC STRIP FOR YEARS. YOU LOVED THE MOVIE WITH WARREN BEATTY AND MADONNA. NOW YOU CAN PLAY THE VIDEO GAME ON YOUR GENESIS. AS THE WORLD-RENOWNED, SUPER CRIMEFIGHTING DETECTIVE, DICK TRACY, YOU SINGLEHANDEDLY DECLARE WAR ON THE MOB, INCLUDING SUCH NOTABLES AS PRUNEFACE AND FLATTOP.



D. J. BOY (KANEKO SEISAKUSHO)

AMERICAN SAMMY'S HOT ARCADE GAME, WHICH COULD BE CALLED *DOUBLE DRAGON* ON ROLLER SKATES, COMES TO THE GENESIS SCREEN. YOU'LL HAVE BURN YOUR WHEELS THROUGH THIS SCROLLING PUNCH-AND-KICK CONTEST AS YOU TAKE ON THE WILD GANG, WHO ARE TRYING TO KEEP YOU FROM RESCUING YOUR GIRLFRIEND. TO YOUR BENEFIT, YOU HAVE A MYRIAD OF OFFENSIVE MOVES TO ASSIST YOU, BROUGHT OUT BY PUSHING COMBINATIONS OF CONTROL PAD BUTTONS.



E-SWAT (SEGA)

THE POPULAR CRIMEFIGHTING ARCADE GAME, IN WHICH YOU PLAY A FUTURISTIC COP, COMES TO THE GENESIS. MUCH LIKE *ROBOCOP*, AS THE GAME PROGRESSES, YOU CAN EQUIP YOUR ROBOTIC OFFICER WITH SUCH ENHANCING FEATURES AS ARMOR AND ADVANCED WEAPONRY, AS YOU BATTLE IT OUT WITH GANGS OF CRIMINALS ON THE CITY STREETS.



FINAL ZONE (RENOVATION PRODUCTS)

IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY, AND THE WEAPON OF CHOICE IN WARFARE IS THE NEW AGE POWER-SUIT (NAP), MECHANIZED ARMOR THAT AMPLIFIES THE ABILITIES OF THE ONE WEARING IT. ON THE "ULTIMATE BATTLEFIELD," YOUR ON-SCREEN SOLDIER, HOWARD BOWIE, MUST ACQUIRE MANY WEAPONS ON HIS NAP TO SUCCESSFULLY BATTLE HIS WAY THROUGH TO DESTROY THE BLOODY AXIS.

FIRE SHARK (DREAMWORKS)

BASED ON THE ARCADE FOLLOW-UP TO *SKY SHARK*, THIS AERIAL MISSION WILL PUT YOU AT THE CONTROLS OF A POWERFUL BIPLANE, EQUIPPED WITH BOMBS AND BULLETS—THOUGH YOU CAN RECEIVE FUTURISTIC HIGH-TECH WEAPONS AS YOU GO. YOUR ENDEAVOR WILL PUT YOU UP AGAINST OTHER BIPLANES AND TANKS, AS WELL AS GIGANTIC BATTLESHIPS AND POWERFUL ASSAULT PLANES.

HARD DRIVIN' (TENGEN)

TRANSLATED FROM THE INCREDIBLE COIN-OP DRIVING GAME, YOU'RE AT THE WHEEL OF A SOUPED-UP ROADSTER, AND YOU CAN CHOOSE TO COMPETE ON EITHER THE RACE TRACK OR STUNT TRACK. BOTH TRACKS WILL TEST YOUR ABILITY TO BEAT THE BEST LAP TIME; THE FIRST AS A PEDAL-TO-THE-METAL SPEEDATHON, THE LATTER FILLED WITH LOOPS AND JUMPS. IF YOU QUALIFY, YOU'LL TAKE ON THE DRONE CAR IN A HEAD-TO-HEAD MATCHUP.

INSECTOR X (SAGE'S CREATION)

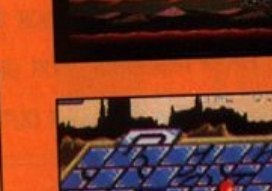
IN A STORYLINE NOT OFTEN EMPLOYED IN VIDEO GAMES, YOU'RE AN INSECT BUZZING THROUGH FIVE DIFFERENT WORLDS. DURING YOUR TREK, YOU FACE OFF AGAINST HYBRID BUG ROBOTS, BUT YOUR INFERIOR WEAPONS WON'T HELP YOU SURVIVE—UNLESS YOU FIND THE SPECIAL SHOT INSECTS THAT DUMP WEAPON POWER-UPS IN YOUR PATH. EACH WORLD ENDS WITH YOU FACING A "SUPREME INSECT BOSS" READY TO SQUASH YOU LIKE A BUG.

JUNCTIONS (MICRONET USA)

THIS PUZZLER REQUIRES YOU TO MANEUVER A BALL AROUND A GRID, BUT YOU CAN MOVE PIECES TO CHANGE THE TRACK. YOU CAN ALSO PASS BOOSTERS (TO CHANGE THE BALL SPEED, FREEZE ENEMIES AND CHANGE THE TIME LIMIT, AMONG OTHERS) AS YOU TRY TO MAKE ALL THE CHECKPOINTS.

KA-GE-KI (SAGE'S CREATION)

YOUR GOAL: BEAT THE NINE BOSS CHARACTERS, USING JUST YOUR FISTS. ON YOUR WAY, YOU'LL HAVE TO DUKE IT OUT WITH THE BOSSES' UNDERLINGS, WHO ARE EQUALLY TOUGH—AND THEY HAVE LOTS OF OTHER WEAPONS, LIKE FIRE BOMBS OR EXPLOSIVES, TO BLOCK YOUR PATH.



BIMINI RUN™



Bimini Run is a trademark of Nuvision Entertainment, Inc.

A unique, action-packed, high-seas adventure!

Experience the awesome power of your high speed performance boat! Pilot her across uncharted waters as Kenji Ohara pursues the evil "Dr. Orca," in search of his island hideaway. Save your kidnapped sister and destroy his diabolical plan to take over the world!

The challenges are formidable!

Evade and destroy his fleet of killer boats and choppers. Beware of the dreaded Bimini Triangle where strange sea creatures and wild sea conditions threaten your survival.



© 1990 Nuvision Entertainment, Inc.

New generation games from Nuvision Entertainment!

A breakthrough in realistic game experience presents new and exciting challenge and adventures for hundreds of hours of involving game play. A truly unique game for the Sega® Genesis® System.



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P.O. Box 5064, Westport, CT 06881
CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

POPULOUS (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

CAN YOU HANDLE BEING IN A GOOD GOD'S SHOES? IT'S GOT LOTS OF RESPONSIBILITIES, SUCH AS LEVELING THE LAND FOR YOUR PEOPLE TO SETTLE ON AND RAVAGING WITH QUAKES AND FLOODS THE HOLDINGS OF EVIL, YOUR PERPETUAL ADVERSARY. THERE ARE 500 WORLDS TO CONQUER. WILL YOU BE VICTORIOUS AFTER ARMAGEDDON? MAY THE BEST GOD WIN.



SHADOW BLASTERS (SAGE'S CREATION)

SAGE'S CREATION BLENDS ROLE-PLAYING, ADVENTURE AND ARCADE ELEMENTS IN THIS HYBRID, TWO-PLAYER CONTEST. THERE ARE FOUR CHARACTERS—USING THE SPECIAL POWERS OF NINJA MAGIC, FIRE, WIND AND LIGHTNING—THAT MUST BE ORGANIZED INTO A QUESTING PARTY. ONCE ASSEMBLED, YOU WILL TRAVEL THROUGH MANY AREAS FILLED WITH ELABORATE GRAPHICS AND LANDSCAPES.



SHOVE IT—THE WAREHOUSE GAME (DREAMWORKS)

FOR THE PUZZLE-LOVING CROWD COMES A GAME THAT IS SET IN A WAREHOUSE, AND IT'S UP TO YOU, STEVEDORE, TO MOVE THE CRATES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PLACE ALL OF THEM ON THEIR PROPER LOCATIONS IN AS FEW MOVES AS POSSIBLE. DON'T GET "BOXED" INTO A CORNER, BECAUSE THERE ARE 160 ROOMS THAT YOU HAVE TO CLEAR BEFORE YOU CAN CALL IT A DAY. FINISH THE JOB AND YOU'LL EARN ENOUGH DOUGH TO BUY A SPORTS CAR FOR YOUR GIRLFRIEND.



SUPER HYOLIDE (SEISMIC)

A MIXTURE OF ROLE-PLAYING STRATEGY AND ACTION GAMING, THIS FOUR-MEG QUEST IS PACKED WITH SPELL-CASTING AND MAGIC. AS YOU BATTLE YOUR CHARACTER—EITHER A WARRIOR, A THIEF, A MONK OR A PRIEST—THROUGH HUNDREDS OF SWORD BATTLES IN CITIES, DUNGEONS AND VILLAGES, THE GAME CYCLES YOU THROUGH A REALISTIC SEQUENCE OF DAY TURNING TO NIGHT AND BACK TO DAY AGAIN. YOUR ADVENTURER MUST ALSO TAKE TIME TO EAT AND SLEEP OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

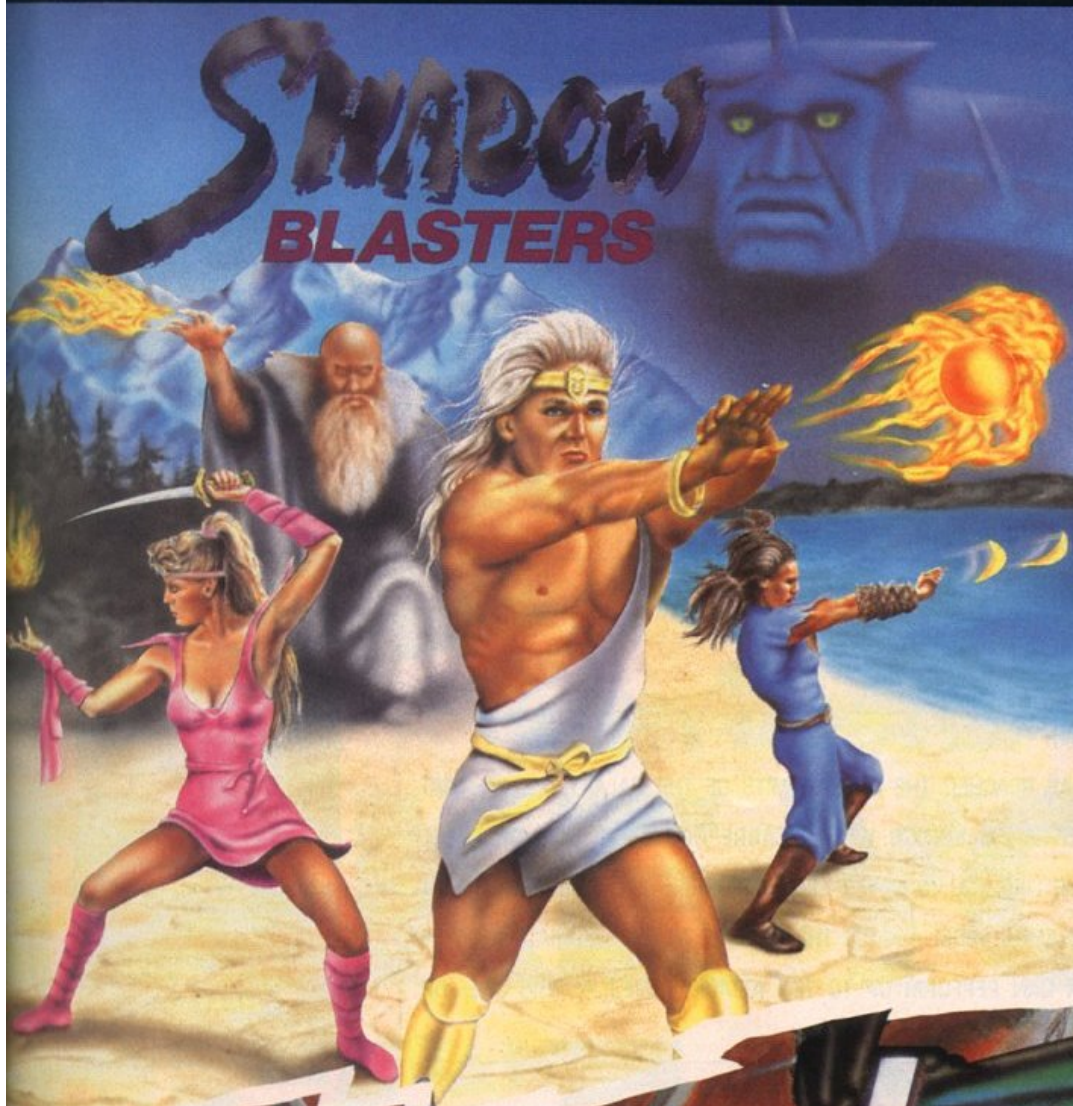


SUPER VOLLEYBALL (VIDEO SYSTEMS)

IT'S TIME FOR INTERNATIONAL HARD-COURT VOLLEYBALL ACTION ON THE GENESIS. THIS SPORTING SIMULATION LETS YOU SELECT FROM LOTS OF OPTIONS: PLAY AGAINST THE COMPUTER OR AGAINST ANOTHER PLAYER; PICK ONE OF THE 16 EXISTING TEAMS OR CREATE YOUR OWN FROM THE PLAYER POOL; ALTER THE ABILITIES OF YOUR PLAYERS; OR SIMPLY SET TWO COMPUTER TEAMS IN MOTION AND WATCH THE ACTION FROM THE SIDELINES.



FRESH FROM THE SAGE



**SUMMON THE POWER OF
HYPRION TO STAND DEFIANT
IN THE SHADOW OF EVIL**

Experience the supernatural Powers of Warriors from distant times as they roam the planet battling the forces of darkness, the phantoms of Ashura. Hurling the Flames of Justice they seek and destroy the scourge that has befallen the Earth.



Insector X

THEY'RE GONNA BUG YA!...TO DEATH!

Compared to these guys, killer bees are about as scary as a butterfly. In this awesome insect Empire you've got to be a fast gun! No can of bug spray will help you here. These giant mechanized insects mean business. Become too enthralled with the beautiful landscape and your daydream could become a nightmare.

*Become ... Insector X!
A moment's delay could be your last!!!*



**SAGE'S
CREATION**

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CIRCLE #135 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

**SEGA
GENESIS**
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

KLAX (TENGEN)

BRAIN-TEASING GAMING AT ITS BEST FROM THIS FAITHFUL TRANSLATION OF AN ATARI COIN-OP GAME. TUMBLING TILES MUST BE PUT IN MATCHING ROWS, COLUMNS AND PATTERNS FOR POINTS.



LAKERS VS. CELTICS (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

EA'S CLASSIC COMPUTER BASKETBALL CONTEST MAKES ITS WAY TO THE GENESIS. MOVE ALL THE BIG-NAME NBA PLAYERS ACROSS THE HARDWOOD FLOOR, AS YOU TRY TO SURVIVE THE PLAYOFFS AND TAKE HOME THE CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS FOR YOUR TEAM.



MONDU'S FIGHT PALACE (ACTIVISION)

IN THE YEAR 2550 A.D., MAN HAS REACHED THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE GALAXY AND IN THAT JOURNEY HAS ENCOUNTERED MANY STRANGE BEINGS WITH BIZARRE CUSTOMS. ONE OF THESE STRANGE CUSTOMS IS A GAME—A GAME LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. PART WRESTLING, PART MARTIAL ARTS, YOU'LL TAKE ON TEN CHAMPS FROM ACROSS THE COSMOS IN THE ULTIMATE KING OF THE GALAXY BATTLE. EACH CHARACTER CAN PERFORM UP TO TEN ATTACK MOVES IN THIS ONE- OR TWO-PLAYER GALACTIC SLUGFEST.



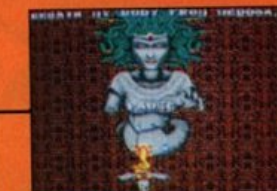
PAT RILEY BASKETBALL (SEGA)

THE FORMER HEAD COACH OF THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS LENDS HIS NAME TO ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING SPORTS GAMES EVER DEVELOPED FOR THE WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES. FEATURING ALL THE GREAT MOVES FOUND IN REAL BASKETBALL AND EXPLOITING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE GENESIS, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ZOOM IN AND ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE THE SLAM DUNK AS IT HAPPENS.



PHELIOS (NAMCO AMERICA)

NAMCO MIXES MYTHOLOGY AND VERTICALLY SCROLLING EXCITEMENT, AS YOU TAKE THE ROLE OF APOLLO, ON A TREK TO SAVE ARTEMIS, YOUR LADY FAIR. ON THE OTHER END OF THIS SEVEN-LEVEL SHOOTER IS TYPHON, THE EVIL LORD WHO HAS IMPRISONED ARTEMIS AND TURNED HER TO STONE. ATOP THE BACK OF YOUR FAITHFUL FLYING STEED, PEGASUS, YOU TAKE OFF TO BATTLE AGAINST TYPHON'S GUARDS, LIKE MEDUSA, WHO ARE CLASSIC MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES.





FIRE SHARK™

Arcade action hits home!

As a ghostly aviator, travel through time to defend a small South Pacific island. Your bi-plane is equipped with such futuristic weapons as wide-range machine guns, red power lasers, air-to-air/air-to-ground missiles, and the deadly green "shark" ray.

Your skill as a pilot is challenged at every moment as you fly straight into the jaws of the enemy! So grit your teeth, lower your goggles, and take to the skies with the vertical scrolling arcade hit — *Fire Shark!*



SEGA
GENESIS™

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!

Target Earth™

Blast into futuristic adventure!

You are Rex, Commander of the Earth Defense League, sent to defend your people against an enemy cyborg invasion. In your Assault Suit, you control the most powerful weapons known to man.

Beginning on Jupiter's Ganymede moon, 8 specific missions carry you through space and back to Earth. Complete each level to learn the shocking story behind your main adversary, the evil cyborg Rance.



For additional information on DreamWorks games, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
DreamWorks Genesis Games, 10201
Wayzata Blvd. - Suite 150,
Minnetonka, MN 55343.



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THE SWORD OF VERMILION (SEGA)

THE GRAPHIC CAPABILITIES OF THE GENESIS ARE PUSHED TO THE LIMIT IN THIS EXCITING ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURE GAME. AS THE PRINCE, THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, YOU NEED TO TAKE ON EDWARD THE THIRD OF CARTAHENA, WHO HAS REMOVED THE SERENITY FROM YOUR COUNTRY. TO COMPLETE YOUR TASK, YOU'LL NEED TO FIND ITEMS AND TALK TO EVERYONE YOU MEET.

TARGET EARTH (DREAMWORKS)

THE ROBOTS FROM CHRON ARE PLANNING AN ATTACK ON EARTH, BUT THE ASSAULT SUIT UNIT IS ON THE JOB, READY TO TAKE ON THE MECHANOIDS THROUGH EIGHT LEVELS OF INTENSE COMBAT. THE GAME IS LOADED WITH SCURRYING SOLDIERS AND GIANT ENEMY PLANES, SCATTERING BOMBS AND BULLETS TO DO IN YOUR ON-SCREEN COUNTERPART.

TECHNOCOP (RAZOR SOFT)

AS A MEMBER OF THE MOST RESPECTED BAND OF CRIMEFIGHTERS, THE ENFORCERS, YOU HAVE TO ERADICATE THE D.O.A. GANG, WHO ARE TERRORIZING YOUR WORLD. TO HELP OUT, YOU'VE GOT AN .88 MAGNUM, A CRIMINAL DETECTOR AND A VMAX TURBO CAR TO GET THROUGH THE 11 LEVELS.

THUNDER FORCE III (TECHNOSOFT)

EIGHT LEVELS OF HORIZONTALLY SCROLLING BLASTING IS WHAT YOU'LL BE UP AGAINST IN THIS SEQUEL TO ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR GENESIS GAMES EVER MADE. ENEMIES COME AT YOU FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, AND MASSIVE END BOSSES WILL ATTEMPT TO FINISH YOU OFF.

TRAMPOLINE TERROR (DREAMWORKS)

A PATH OF TRAMPOLINES SURROUNDS THE ALIEN FORTRESS THAT HAS SUDDENLY APPEARED FROM OUTER SPACE, WHICH IS YOUR ROAD TO SUCCESS. BOUNCE THROUGH EIGHT AREAS AND 32 LEVELS IN AN EFFORT TO THWART THIS ENEMY INVASION.

WHIP RUSH (RENOVATION PRODUCTS)

IN THE YEAR 2222, A SPACE CRAFT IS DETECTED NEAR THE MARTIAN MOON—AND IT'S HEADING FOR EARTH TO BLAST IT OUT OF THE SKY. THE WHIP RUSH HAS BEEN CREATED AS A LAST RESORT, TO TRY TO DEFEND YOUR HOMELAND FROM THIS SCOURGE FROM SPACE.

ZANY GOLF (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

THE WILD MINIATURE GOLF GAME MOVES FROM THE COMPUTER-GAME WORLD TO A GENESIS CARTRIDGE, GAINING ANOTHER BATCH OF HOLES ALONG THE WAY. PUTT THROUGH BOUNCING HAMBURGERS, A MOVING HOLE, A BREAKOUT-LIKE LAYOUT AND OTHER WACKY GREENS. THE FRUSTRATION FACTOR WILL DRIVE YOU NUTS!



THUNDER FORCE III

Just when you thought
you had seen it all...

A new challenge
radiates forth from
worlds beyond imagination.
Surge through scrolling lava
flows and the thrust of massive
rock caves. Avoid losing control
amid perilous bubbles in
the murky depths ... to en-
counter even greater challenges
in realms of deeper dimension.



Technosoft

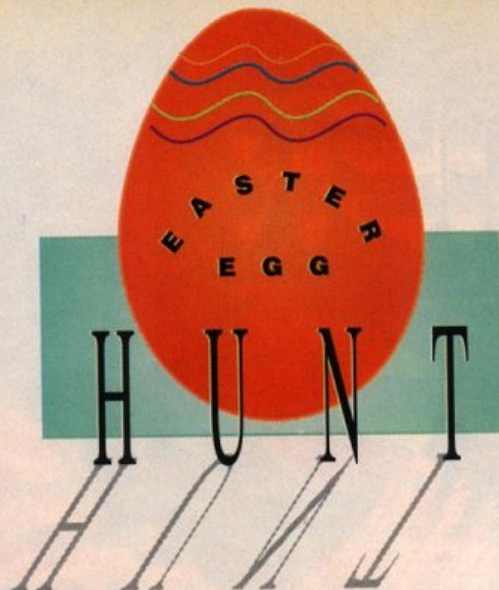
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CIRCLE #137 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

SEGA
GENESIS
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

TARGET EARTH

DreamWorks for the Genesis



When the title screen shows two continues, go to the option screen and press **START**. This will give you nine continues.



Go through the first round without killing anything, then defeat the first stage end boss without hitting any other enemy characters. When you go to the weapons screen, you should have a complete arsenal.



At anytime during play, press pause, then on Controller 2 press the **START** button. When you take your game off pause, Rex's life meter will go down but he will not die. Rex is now invincible.

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Sega for the Genesis



Unfortunately, the invincible feature mentioned in the July 1990 issue of VG&CE doesn't work for all cartridges. Noah Dziobecki of Long Beach, California, wrote in with an update for this feature. When the title screen appears, press U, B, D, B, L, B, R and B until you hear the tone. Then hold down B and press **START** until the game begins. Thanks for informing us of the new code, Noah.

Michael Jackson's

Moonwalker

Sega for the Genesis



In some rounds of *MoonWalker*, if you rescue the children in the correct order, you can become the mechanical robot. In round 2-1, if you rescue the girl in the window located in the upper left first, a shooting star will appear. Jump to get the star and become the robot. In round 3-2, rescue the first girl, located behind the rock.



(Keep in mind that Sega warns not to remove cartridges with the power on, so try these next few tricks at your own risk.)

Thunder Force II

Sega for the Genesis



Here's an egg that will allow you to select any level and start with unlimited men. To initiate this trick, insert the *TF II* cartridge and turn on the Genesis. When the Sega logo appears, pull the cartridge out and insert it back into the Genesis. (Don't turn the power off throughout this trick.) After you reinsert the cartridge, hit the **RESET** button. When the title screen appears with the picture of the plane, hit **START** so that the *Thunder Force II* logo appears; then press A and **START** to go into the option screen. You will know the trick worked if the option screen is a different color. You should be able to select from Levels 1 through 9.



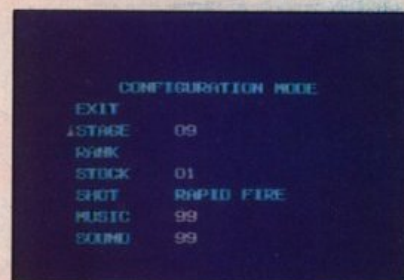
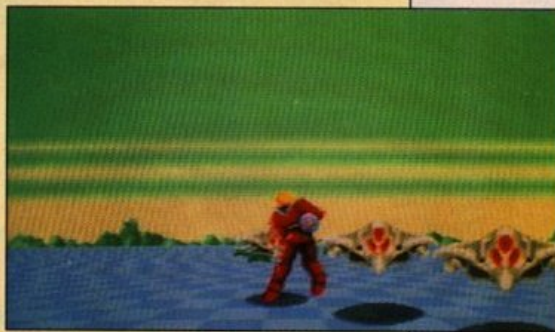
To get unlimited men, you should keep trying the trick until the option screen shows the inventory at one life. Push L on the controller twice so that your stock reads 99. When you start the game, you will have unlimited lives. Thanks to Eric Adams of Strongsville, Ohio, for sending in these eggs.

Space Harrier

Sega for the Genesis



Geoff Murray of Santa Barbara, California, has found a way to obtain 150 extra men. First, insert the *Altered Beast* cartridge into the Genesis and turn it on. Then, as the Sega logo appears, take the cartridge out of the Genesis, but do not turn the Genesis off. If you did it correctly, the logo will remain on the screen. (If not, try the procedure again.) If the logo is still on-screen, insert *Space Harrier* and press the **RESET** button. Start the game as you normally would and watch as the extra men keep racking up. Thanks for this interesting tip, Geoff.

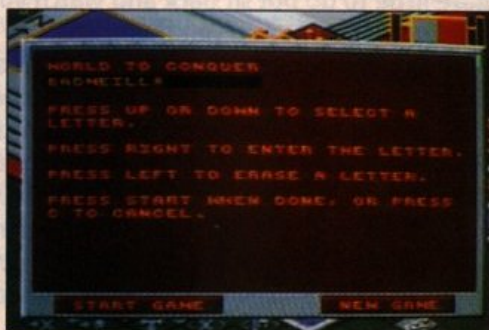


Populous

Electronic Arts for the Genesis



Here's a password for the 400th world. At the beginning replace "GENESIS" with "BAD-MEILL." Thanks to Verna Legaspi of Seattle, Washington, for this pointer.





THE GOD GAME:

A PLAYER'S GUIDE

Populous

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

Populous, a war game by Electronic Arts just released for the Genesis, is probably one of the most original video games of the last five years. In this battle of good against evil, you play the part of a god who must help the good armies defeat an evil god's hordes.

Populous is not only an original game, but also a controversial one. Like most original games, you either love it or hate it. This is not a fast-action arcade game (although you must learn to give fast orders), but rather a thinking game. In fact, once you get good at setting up your world, there may be times

when you have little to do but sit back and watch your followers act out the orders you have given them.

If you like strategic war games and are fascinated with the idea of creating a world and watching what happens, you'll find Populous to be one of the finest games in your video library. Whatever your tastes in video games, being a god is no easy task, as most novice Populous players quickly discover. You must know how to create good land for settlements and move your people about. You must also learn to control such natural disasters as earthquakes, volcanoes and floods.



DE TO

US

As with any strategy game, it takes a while to master *Populous'* controls. Using the following photos, we will give you a crash course in godhood, telling everything you need to know to get started defeating evil.

The photo captions are a continuing narrative, so you should start at the beginning and read through to the end, just as you would with any article.

When you've mastered the techniques presented here, you'll be well on your way to ridding the Book of Worlds of the evil armies.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER



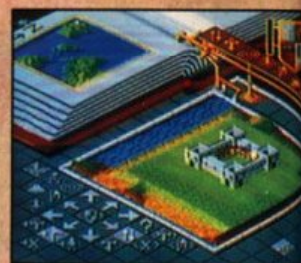
At the beginning of the game, you'll usually start with a very small population. Your first job is to increase your population as fast as you can.



To increase your population, you must flatten out land so that your people can settle and grow crops. The more flat space you place around a settlement, the better the housing. This house sure beats the grass-roofed shack in the previous photo.



Here the player has added still more flat land. The house has become a stone fortress.



With enough flat land you'll soon have a full sized castle.



Using the three-move land creation, the water beside the castle is quickly ready for people.



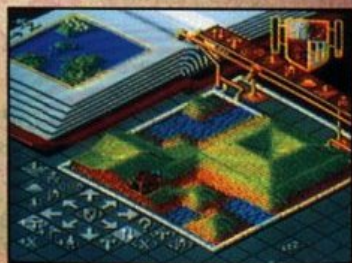
When you need to fill in a trench like the one shown here...



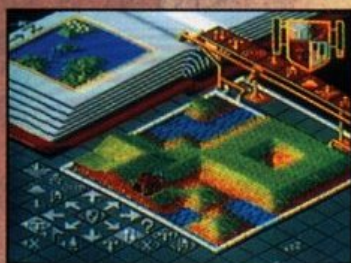
...don't try to raise land from inside the trench. That's a slow process. Instead...



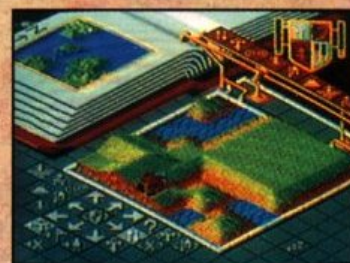
...place the cursor on the edge of the trench, and raise the land from there. This clever trick...



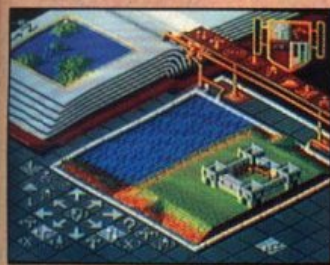
...twice...



...three times. Now, fill in the single hole to create...



...flat land from what used to be a pesky hill. Isn't this god business wonderful?



As you may suspect, in order to build your population quickly, you must learn to raise and lower land masterfully. Look at the water next to the castle here. The player could spend a lot of time filling in the land one square at a time. But there's a shortcut. To raise land quickly from the sea...



...first raise a single square. Then...



...raise the land again, in exactly the same position. The original square will drag up a base of nine squares. Now...



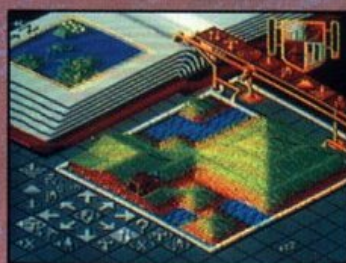
...just lower the original square, and you'll have created nine squares of land in only three moves. Wow! Neat trick!



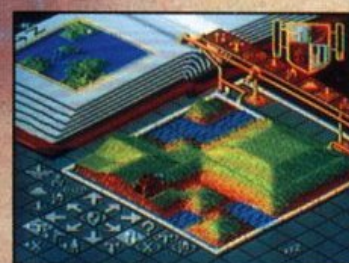
...fills in the trench immediately. All you must do now is...



...lower the "nipple," and you've changed a trench into flat land in just two moves.



You can use the same trick in reverse to lower a small hill. For example, place your cursor on top of the hill shown here. Then...



...lower the land once...



Now that you've mastered land maintenance, here's another trick you can use to produce new settlements rapidly. Because you have only limited power at the beginning of the game (as measured by the manna meter shown below the shield in the upper-right corner of the screen), you need to create manna fast. Castles, like the one shown here, are great manna generators. So, first create a castle.



Although castles create a lot of manna, it takes them a while to create walkers. (Walkers are the little people who stroll around, settling the land.) Here's how to have your castle and a walker too. First, bring up a single square of land near the castle. This move will reduce the castle to a smaller building, usually forcing a walker out. Then...



...sink the square again, to bring back the castle. Presto! A castle and a walker. Try this trick on all your castles in the beginning of the game in order to create a steady flow of walkers. Once you have many buildings producing walkers, you can let the castles build up strength.



Of course, at the same time you're building your settlements, the evil army is building its world. While you're working to create a large population, you must take some time out to slow your enemy. A good way to do this is with a swamp. Find a flat, populated area in enemy territory, like the one shown here. Then...



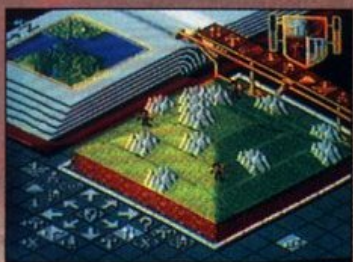
...swamp it. (Of course, you must first have enough manna to use the swamp attack.) As you can see from this photo, a swamp makes the land less inhabitable, which reduces the size of buildings. Reducing the buildings forces out walkers...



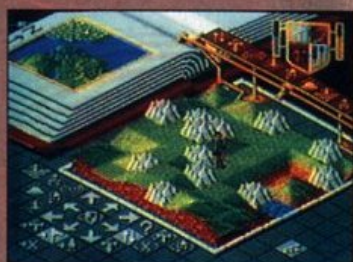
...which are the swallowed up by the swamp (the speckled areas).



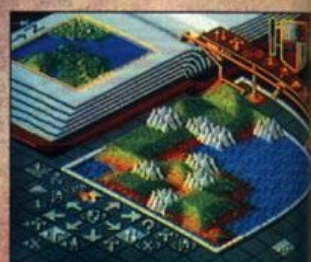
...and maybe even three times. A single volcano wipes out a lot of buildings and leaves the land temporarily inhabitable (too many rocks). A double or triple volcano raises the land so high that it wipes out a huge portion of the enemy's territory. The evil forces may not be able to recover from such devastation.



But what if the enemy uses a volcano on you? Ouch! The fastest way to reflaten the land and get rid of some of the rocks is to use an earthquake on yourself.



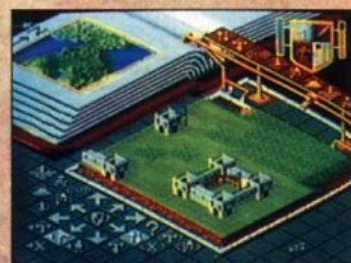
After a single earthquake, the volcano shown in the previous picture will look like this.



After a second earthquake the land has been reduced almost completely to water level. Now you can sink the rocks one by one (or you can leave them, if there are not too many) and rebuild the land.



Keep in mind that the evil god has a few tricks up his sleeve (not mentioned in the instructions) that are not available to you. In this photo, the long range of mountains, which cuts through the good army's entire land mass, was created by the evil god. Watch for dark magicians on magic carpets and huge, green monsters, both of which, among other creatures, will wreak havoc in your settlements.



The most devastating weapon is the flood. The flood causes so much damage that it may change the outcome of the entire game. Although a flood is a great way to significantly reduce your enemy's population, it is dangerous and may backfire if you're not careful. The player in the picture above finally has enough manna for a flood. See the population meters? (The gray bar [good] is on the left of the shield and the yellow bar [evil] on the right.) After the flood...



When you build up a lot of manna, an even more devastating weapon is the volcano. As you can see here, this player's manna meter indicates plenty of power for a volcano. So...



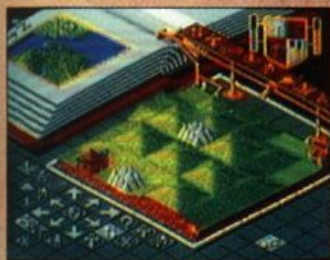
...he first finds a flat populated area in enemy territory. Then...



...he unleashes the volcano attack—not just once, but...



...twice...



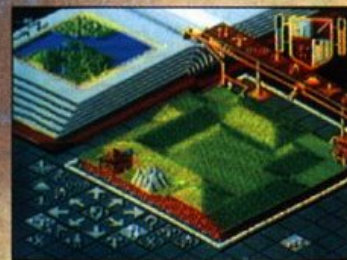
The white rocks (or the gray rocks in a desert) are fairly easy to sink. First...



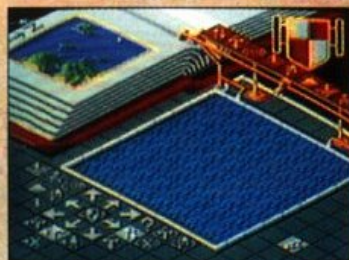
...dig out the land surrounding the rock. Eventually...



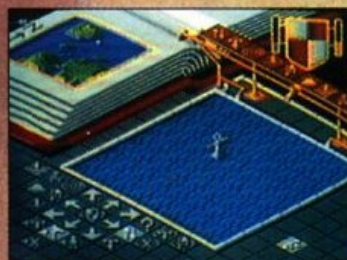
...the rock will sink out of sight.



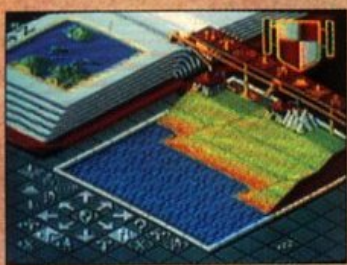
Once the rock is gone, raise the land again. Get rid of ruined buildings (buildings that have been burned by an enemy knight) the same way. Of course, in many cases, it might be quicker to just build somewhere else.



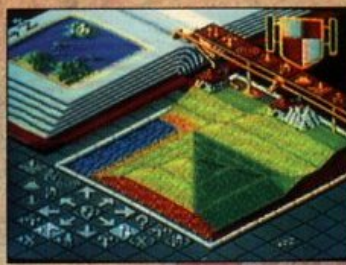
...Arrrgggghh! Both populations have been reduced to almost nothing. (Look at the population meters.) This player forgot to build his land up high before using the flood. Not only has he lost almost his entire population, he has far less land left than the evil armies. See the small island with the white dots on the book page? That's all the land Good has left. The remaining land shown on the book page belongs to Evil.



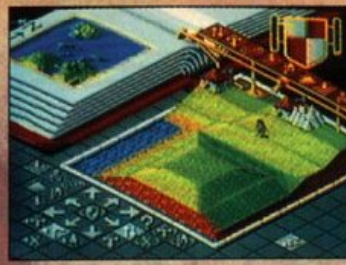
Worse, the Good's leader is dead, and their Papal magnet is stranded out in the ocean. (You can't move your Papal magnet without a leader, and the only way to create a leader is to have a walker touch the Papal magnet, which of course no walker can do as long as the magnet is stuck in the ocean.)



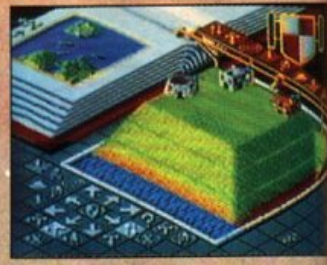
Sometimes Evil can create floods too. When you start a new world, if the world description shows that Evil has this ability, you should build everything high—at least three levels as shown here. To build high...



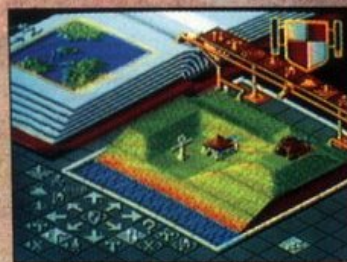
...draw the land up four times, then...



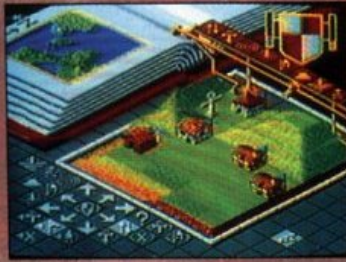
...sink the resultant hill's point. Soon...



...you'll have lots of high flat land on which you people can settle safely without fear of floods. Best of all, the computer is very likely to make the same mistake the player a few photos ago did and flood itself into oblivion!



The second strategy is to use your leader and your knights to destroy Evil, settlement by settlement, building by building. This strategy takes longer, but is more satisfying than a quickie Armageddon. To use this strategy, you must master the control of your Papal magnet (the big, ankh-shaped thing next to the cabin in the photo here), which is the only method by which you can tell your people where to go.



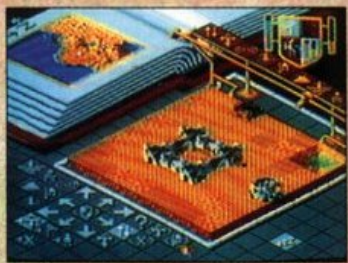
To move your people toward the enemy, frequently move your Papal magnet, keeping it near the front of your expansion. Each time you move the magnet, select the "go to Papal magnet" mode of play, to draw your leader and your people toward the magnet.



While your people migrate toward the magnet, flatten some land, then turn off the "go to Papal magnet" mode, and go back to the "settle" mode. After a while...



...move the magnet again. Try to keep your leader near the magnet (see the small magnet on the cabin? The leader is in there), because when you change a leader into a knight, the magnet moves to wherever your leader is before the change takes place. You want your knight to start out on the front lines so he doesn't have so far to go before he can burn some enemy buildings. Don't let your Papal magnet get stranded in enemy territory! Retreat when necessary.



...leaving behind...



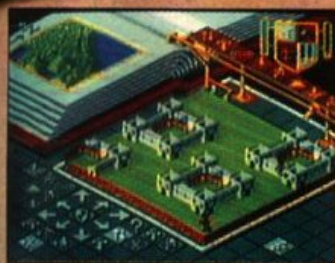
...untold destruction. Knights are formidable soldiers.



The best defense against enemy knights is to keep a lot of small buildings on your front lines. It takes a knight longer to work his way through the small buildings.



The settlement in the photo above, which has been built near the front lines, is a sitting duck for an enemy knight. All those castles to burn!



There are two basic strategies for beating Evil. The first is to build your population until it's large enough to call up Armageddon and win. Look at the population bars on either side of the shield in the photo here. Good's meter (gray) is full, while Evil's meter (yellow) is almost empty. The manna meter shows enough power for Armageddon. To put Evil out of his misery and end the game quickly, this player decided to use Armageddon.

When Armageddon begins, both Papal magnets are moved to the center of the world, and all the people—both good and evil—run toward them for the final battle. If you select your "view Papal magnet" icon, you'll be able to watch the battle. If you win...

...you'll see something like this...

...after which you'll be given a new world to conquer. (There are 500 of them!)

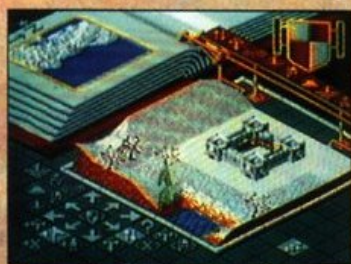


Here Good's leader is...

...transformed into a knight and...

...goes marauding through the enemy settlements...

...killing and burning...



Not all places in the Book of Worlds are lean and green. The ice landscape shown in this photo is a brutal environment in which to conduct a war. People die quickly when exposed to the elements. A change in strategy is required. For example, castles in the ice create no more manna than smaller buildings, so...



...stick with settlements of smaller buildings, which take up less room and produce walkers faster.



Develop finely tuned strategies, and you'll see this guy's face often. Happy godhood!

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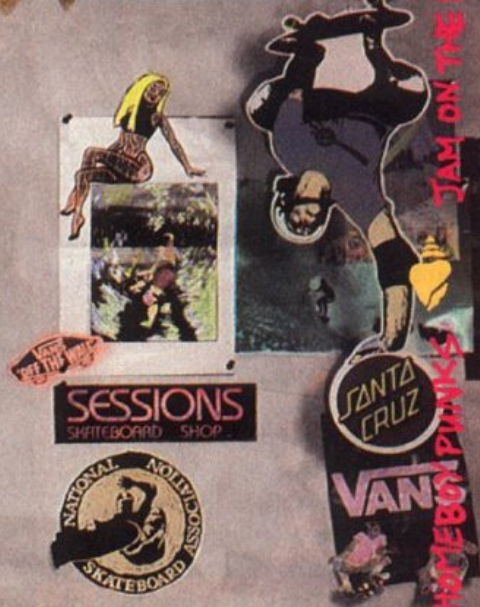
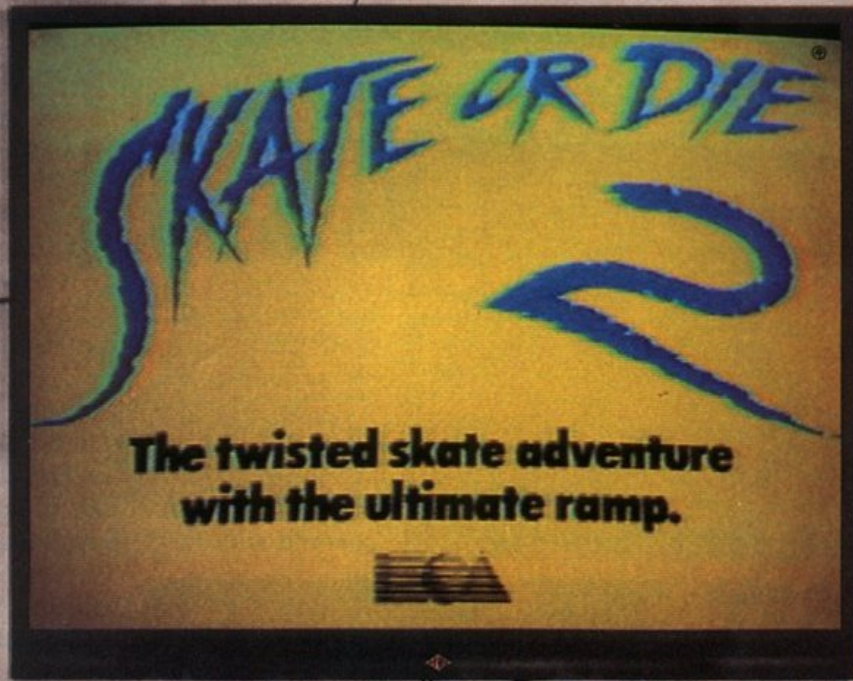
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VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

Dick Tracy

BANDAI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.99)

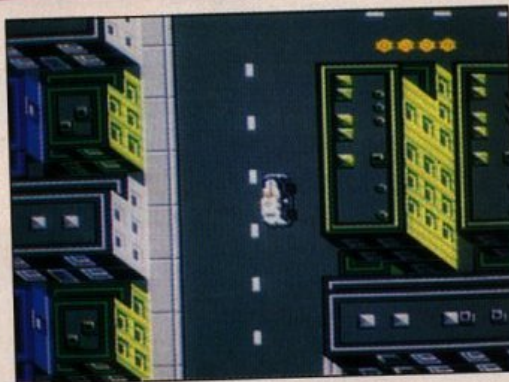
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

"Calling Dick Tracy! Calling Dick Tracy!" It looks like a job for the city's main man—Dick Tracy. Big Boy Caprice is behind the recent crime wave, and, Dick, you've got to put the sleazy hood behind bars where he belongs. Bust Caprice's lieutenants first, then go after Big Boy himself.

In this arcade/action game, you play Dick Tracy, the renowned crime fighter of the century. Unlike most arcade/action games, Tracy doesn't have any superpowers. His only weapon? A standard-issue revolver with 50 bullets. But Tracy also has fists of steel. At least that's what his enemies would say. A few special items and weapons appear during the game, but you'll still need to rely on your problem-solving abilities and quick reflexes to capture Caprice.

Dick Tracy is a man of action, and he's not worried about winning any popularity contests. As a result, there are no points or scores in this game. Instead, Tracy gets four badges that measure his life expectancy on the job. Every time Tracy makes a mistake or gets shot, he loses half a badge. A badgeless Tracy is a dead one—the game is kaput.

Tracy gets his assignments in the police station (where else?), and he must solve five cases before he can nab Caprice. Usually he starts each assignment with a clue that sends him out investigating. In the police station, Tracy can examine mugshots of the known hoods in Caprice's gang—a good place to discover their last known whereabouts. There is also a notebook that records the main clues as Tracy discovers them.



Bandai's Dick Tracy captures the ambiance of the 1990 movie with its primary color scheme and detective action.

Once Tracy has left the police station, he drives his black and white through the city streets, which are displayed on an overhead map—and what a city it is! Every few blocks, rooftop snipers pick away at Tracy's precious badges. Once Tracy leaves his car to explore a building, the scene switches to a sideways cutaway of the building's interior.

While exploring the various structures for clues, Tracy must deal with obstacles and thugs who can punch or shoot at him. He must decide which weapon to use on a thug and be careful not to shoot an unarmed thug; it deducts half a badge!

Fortunately, badges can be replenished by finding first aid at various points in the game or by returning to a police station, where he can restore up to one badge (and recharge his gun).

Once a suspect has been discovered, Tracy must decide whether to interrogate or arrest him (or her). Don't make a mistake or he'll be charged with false arrest. After three

false-arrest charges, Tracy is removed from the case!

Finally, whenever you solve a case, you get a safe combination for the next case. If Tracy dies, use this combination

to start at the beginning of the last case you were on.

Overall, *Dick Tracy* is fun and challenging to play. For the most part, the clues are elementary; this is really a game of action. But then, the guy in the yellow raincoat is no couch potato. Timing, pattern recognition and some clever jumping and climbing are Tracy's main assets. So suit up and get ready to punch and blast your way through the mean streets. Look out Caprice—here comes Dick Tracy!

—George Fontaine

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Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Entertainment
System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Fans of Konami's *Castlevania* series for the NES have cause for celebration: The third chapter, *Dracula's Curse*, has arrived and it's another winner. If you haven't tired of Gothic graphics, malevolent melodies and spooky scenarios, you'll find that this installment is more than worthy of the *Castlevania* name.

It's not obvious from looking at the screen that the hero of *Dracula's Curse* is not Simon Belmont, the character who led players through the first two games. But there's a strong family resemblance: Trevor C. Belmont is Simon's infamous ancestor, a whip-wielding vampire hunter whose goal is to destroy Count Dracula once and for all. Because this game's "story" takes place before the first two *Castlevania* adventures, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that you won't be able to kill Dracula this time. If you did, how would he be able to challenge Simon in the other two games? You can certainly do your best, though—putting him out of commission for a few hundred years would be better than letting him run around in search of blood.

And so, Trevor's endeavors take him through 17 possible levels of creature-filled excitement. Your game may have a different number of levels. There are several points in the game where your path splits in two, and you'll have to decide which way to go. Such options are rare in games like this one. Usually, you're limited to one route, which can get tiresome if you've got a map of the whole game committed to memory.

There's another important difference between *Dracula's Curse* and the first two installments. As Trevor whips his way through legions of Dracula's goons, he might run into one of three powerful spirits that roam the village of Warakiya. These spirits can become Trevor's



Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse, the third installment in Konami's Castlevania series of horror games, is one of the most complete arcade adventures available on the NES.

partners in battle, if he so chooses, though he can only take one partner with him at any given juncture.

Once a spirit has joined your quest, you can change Trevor into that character whenever you please. They've each got unique talents and abilities: Sypha is a magic user who can attack enemies with flames, frozen crystals and lightning bolts; and Grant is a ghostly pirate who has the ability to jump high and cling to walls and ceilings. Interestingly enough, the spirit Alucard is the long-forgotten son of Count Dracula himself, a cave dweller who attacks with a "ball of destruction" and can

change into a bat just like his old man. The "spirit" option is a refreshing dash of variety that really sets this game apart from the other *Castlevania* titles.

Though Trevor is not animated as smoothly as you might expect, his less-than-perfect appearance is perfectly acceptable in the context of the game's rich, detailed backgrounds. There are a number of beautifully drawn locations, like the brightly colored stained glass windows in the first level and the churning, grinding gears and swinging pendulums that make up the guts of the aptly named Clock Tower of Untimely Death. As usual, the music is Konami's finest, with a variety of spooky songs and terrifying tunes to tickle your eardrums as you take on Dracula and his undead underlings.

With its password feature and well-written instruction manual, *Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse* is one of the most complete arcade adventures available for the NES. It's not as challenging as most games of this type, but it'll deliver a lot of colorful monster-movie action on those rainy nights when the wind howls through the trees like one of Trevor's restless spirit friends.

—Chris Bieniek

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Over 18,000 years ago many of the men in China dedicated their life to the study of philosophy. And then applied it to a war to end all wars.

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Characteristics of 180 warlords have been simulated based on the renowned text of *Sanquozhi Yanyi*.

Even 20th century strategists are destined to spend hours, even days on each game. And when you take a break to philosophize on your next action (if you can pull yourself away) you

**Conquering
this game
will take you
centuries.**

can actually save up to three histories exactly where you've left off.

You can put yourself in the place of Liu Bei, dedicated to raising an army for the restoration of the dynasty. Or Guan Yu, an exceptionally skilled warrior, match for a thousand soldiers and worshipped as a god.

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will be hard to win the war against Zhang Jao, the deadly leader of the Yellow Scarve rebels and founder of the Tai Ping sect. Not to mention the most feared

Chinese warlord of all, Lu Bu, destined to be a traitor because of his great strength and courage.



You'll use every strategic cell in your brain to fulfill your constant requirements for weapons, food and manpower. You'll give important commands that could mean your life, and the life of your armies. And in true Chinese tradition, you'll engage in battle again and again to defend your honor. An honor certified by an oath signed in blood.

When all is said and done, there will be room for only one Emperor. Whether or not that will be you is your destiny alone.



In the mountains, rebels await behind every tree.



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Pipe Dream

BULLET-PROOF

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

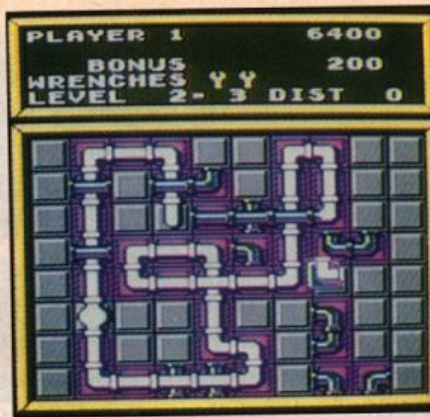
Compared to the current crop of biomechanical monster games, save-the-princess adventures and endless variations on *Galaxian*, *Pipe Dream* is an old-fashioned diversion. The plot is as elementary as *Tetris*—and, in fact, Alexey Pajitnov, creator of *Tetris*, is credited in *Pipe Dream*. The game also brings to mind one of the very first computer games, *Snake*, in which an ever-lengthening worm had to be directed around the screen without touching either a wall or itself. *Pipe Dream* adds the comfort and convenience of modern plumbing to the puzzle, and the result is a simply enjoyable, simply infuriating game.

You're a plumber armed with a large supply of pipe sections: horizontal, vertical and four different "elbows." The pipe sections are kept in a dispenser at the side of the screen; you use each section as it appears (you can see five sections ahead of the one you're currently laying). The sections fit into the squares of an 8x10 grid. One of those squares is already occupied by a spigot, and from this spigot flows *flooz*, a gooey sewer-cleaning fluid. Your job is to lay pipe quickly enough to keep the *flooz* flowing.

Sounds simple, but since the game dispenses the pipe sections in random order, you'll find yourself dropping unusable lengths of pipe all over the playfield. Sooner or later, your maze will end in a cul-de-sac, and when the *flooz* reaches it, the level's over.

Naturally, there's a lot more to it. Each level has a minimum number of pipe sections that the *flooz* *must* flow through in order to advance to the next level, or else the game ends. Certain sections offer two lengths of pipe; horizontal and vertical. You can use these crosses to direct the *flooz* in one direction and with careful planning, come back and utilize the other direction as well, earning a "crossover bonus."

There's another set of complications:



Ported to the NES from Lucasfilm's successful computer game of 1989, Bullet-Proof's version of *Pipe Dream* is addictive, frustrating and fast-moving.

one-way pipes and obstacles. Some obstacles are actually helpful: "reservoir" squares that slow down the *flooz*, bonus squares and outlet squares. If the *flooz* is directed into an outlet square, the level ends and your bonus increases. Other squares must simply

be avoided, like the blackened squares in a crossword puzzle. There are also bonus screens where pipe pieces fall (like *Tetris* blocks) vertically into a well, and you have to create an unbroken length of pipe with the falling sections.

At the end of each level, after you have accumulated points for every section of pipe

the *flooz* flows through, points are subtracted for each leftover pipe section on the board. If you're a sloppy plumber, you can actually end a level with *fewer* points than you started it with! Those leftover pipes aren't permanent, though.

If you find that you can direct the *flooz* through a square that is already occupied by some unused pipe, you can knock out the old pipe (if it's not facing in the direction you need) and put in a new section. There's a penalty for this, albeit a smaller penalty than leaving unused pipe lying around.

Each of the three different play modes the game offers can be played by either one or two players. Two-player mode is an interesting mix of competition and cooperation: While each player is trying for a higher score, both have to work together in order to keep the *flooz* flowing.

Though the graphics are nothing special, there's a good variety of music and sound effects. The game play itself is addictive, frustrating and fast-moving. Those who enjoy elegant puzzles games will find *Pipe Dream* a delightfully maddening challenge.

—Joshua Mandel

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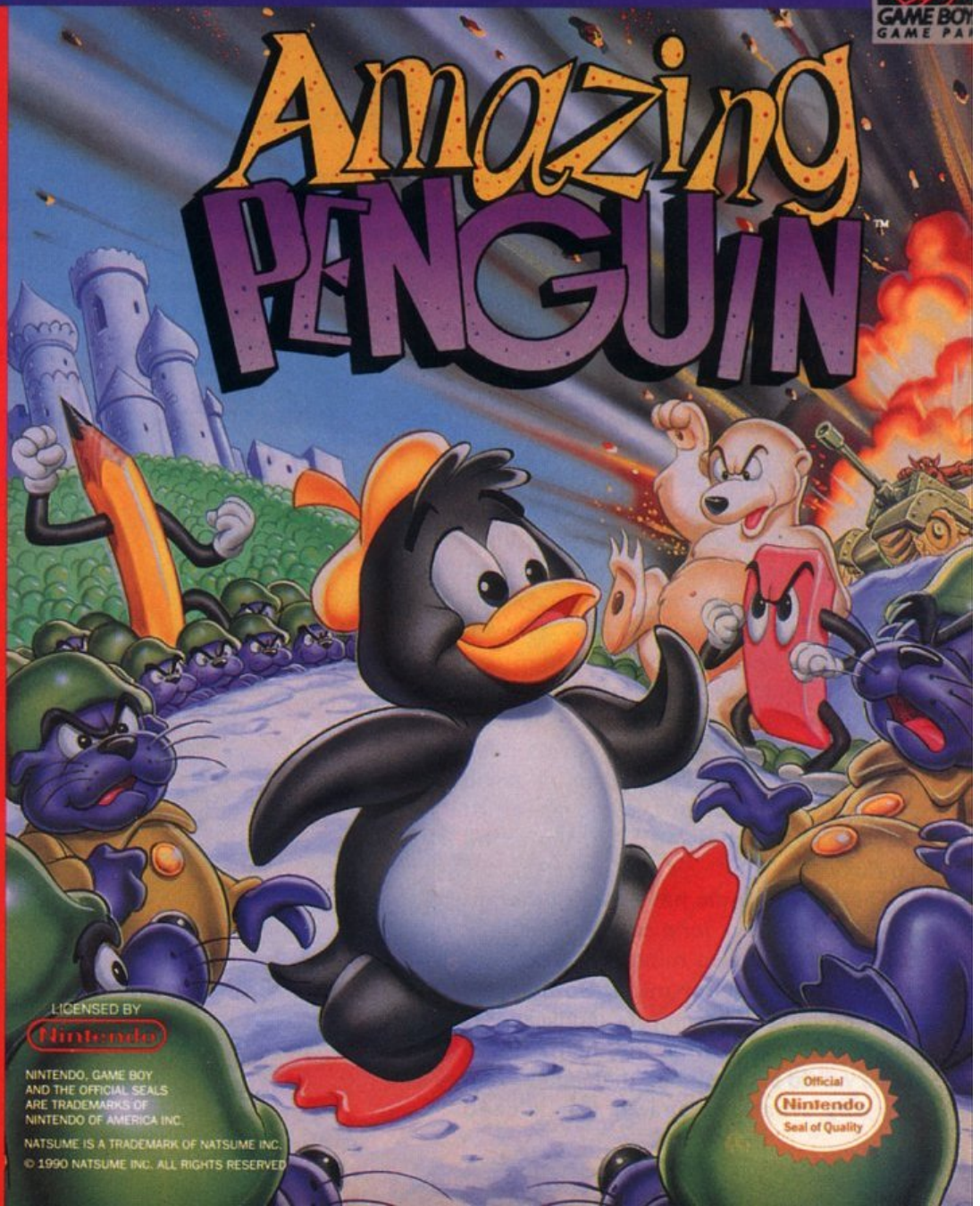
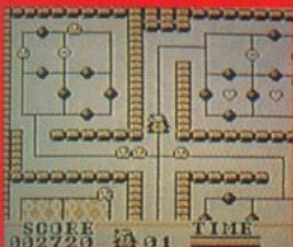
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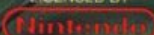
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Psychosis

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$48.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I thought I had seen it all when it comes to storylines for a game, but I have to admit—this is a weird one. "Beware the enemy within!" is your warning. "They say that good and evil live within every mind, and now you know it's true." (Wait, it gets better....) "Your mind wanders into the evil part of its own existence. Soon you will be trapped! The Devil Ugar himself will be your keeper." Apparently, players of this game are having some kind of flashback and must fight their way through their own paranoid delusions until the final confrontation with Ugar.

While the storyline for *Psychosis* is a departure from the norm, the game itself is based upon a familiar theme. To save your own mind, you must battle through five "causes" or stages, flying a small spaceship of sorts that your mind has created to counter various enemies that Ugar has brought forth to steal your soul.

You start this adventure with three ships and three continues, with extra ships every 50,000 points. When you die, you will be placed either in the middle of the round or back at the beginning, depending on how far you advanced. When a continue is used, you always start back at the beginning of the last round you were on.

The game play follows that of your typical horizontally scrolling shooter: Blast 'em before they blast you. Five power-ups are available, consisting of three different weapons, a speedup and a shield. Small "satellites" are available that may be rotated around your ship to act as shields or to kill your enemies. The levels have not only several types of enemies to be dodged or killed, but some areas of twisting walls that must be navigated carefully.

The backgrounds have three different planes of scrolling, for nice effect, but they don't really bring to mind a trip through the evil part of your mind. Sometimes they resemble a beachfront landscape or jungle rather than what the theme of the game would suggest, but, then again, who can say what resides in the wicked



Featuring a weird storyline, NEC's *Psychosis* takes you into the psyche of your on-screen character for some horizontally scrolling shooting excitement, to battle the soul-stealing efforts of Ugar the devil.



recesses of some people's minds (ahem).

Things improve around the fourth level, as the background becomes more abstract, but after three rounds of mundane scenery, it may already be too late. The music and sound effects are pretty good—while the beginning of each round starts off with a short, slow intro, the music quickly jumps to a frantic pace, which accents the action adequately and gives a sense of urgency to this game.

The object of *Psychosis* is to advance through the five levels and face Ugar in order to restore your soul/sanity. (Completing the game will put you back at the beginning, with somewhat higher difficulty.)

While most shooting scrollers can be defeated by simply being aggressive and blasting everything as soon as it appears on the screen, this one requires a bit more strategy and care if you hope to make it anywhere. The power-ups appear with frequency in the early rounds, but later on they become much more scarce. While the aforementioned urgency created by the music will push you to take risks, they often end in disaster.

Psychosis requires a much more conservative approach for a shooter. If you try to force your way through, you are likely to be frustrated. If you don't manage to make it through each round without getting wiped out, you have little chance of advancing. Advanced firepower is required at the end of the rounds for the first three, and serious firepower is needed constantly for the last two.

The only hints offered consist of helpful items like "learn how to pause the game rapidly to slow the action down." I wonder why it wasn't possible to have many more than just five rounds in this game. The rounds aren't extremely long or complicated. Although there are only five, each will need to be memorized and experienced several times before it is mastered.

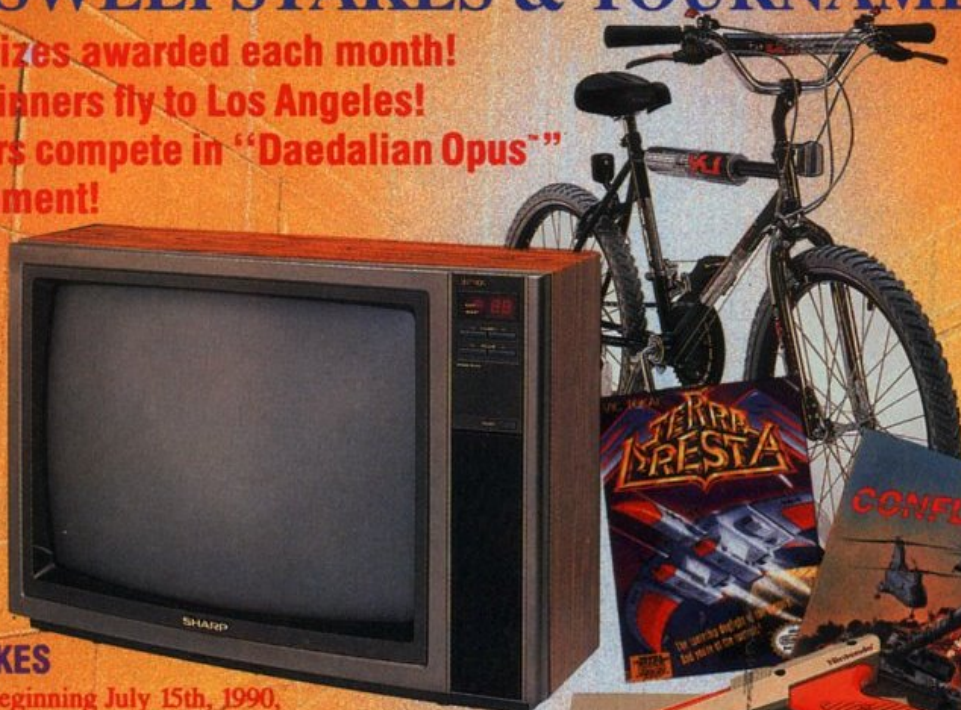
continued on page 12

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P R E S E N T S

The \$100,000 Daedalian Opus™

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- 400 prizes awarded each month!
- Five winners fly to Los Angeles!
- Winners compete in "Daedalian Opus™" Tournament!



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Each month, beginning July 15th, 1990, a drawing will determine 400 winners who will receive prizes including a Daedalian Opus™ jacket. The last drawing for the final 400 winners will occur on November 15th, 1990.

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Five entries will be drawn for the tournament. Each of these five winners will be awarded \$1000 cash, a trip for two to Los Angeles (hotel accommodations and meals are included), two tickets to Disneyland, a Light Boy accessory for use with Game Boy™, and a chance to compete against each other in the Daedalian Opus™ tournament at a CAPTRON World of Nintendo center.

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The champion of the Daedalian Opus™ Tournament will win the following prizes:

- A 25 inch color television set
- A Nintendo Action Set®
- A Mountain bicycle
- The entire Vic Tokai line of NES® game paks



Hurry! Fill in the entry form for this month's sweepstakes and the Daedalian Opus Tournament!

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Only the power of the mind can
solve the puzzles of time



The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

Daedalian Opus™ (dī-dā'lē·ən ō'pəs)



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FOR PLAY ON THE

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Nintendo



LightBoy™, there's no better way to see the light.



LightBoy™ for use
with NINTENDO®
Game Boy®

LightBoy™ is a unique accessory designed to be used with **Game Boy®**. It is a lightweight, compact instrument which unfolds to fit directly onto **Game Boy®**, allowing you to view the screen with light through a magnifying glass. As an added bonus, Vic Tokai is including a shoulder/waist carrying case with the purchase of a **LightBoy™**. This case can house both the **LightBoy™** and the **Game Boy®** together. It also has compartments which hold up to four **Game Boy®** game paks.

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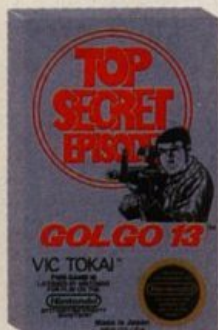
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CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIC TOKAI Revue!

Golgo 13™

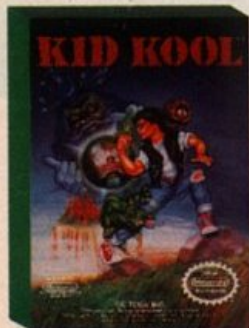
Air wolves and iron tanks? Hey, this dude eats heavy metal for breakfast. The man likes to pack a custom M-16, but his karate kicks to the chops are just as deadly. He's anybody's agent if the price is right; and he's everybody's worst nightmare. **Golgo 13™** is the secret code for action. Air combat anyone? **Golgo 13™** takes you right up the tailpipes of bellowing bombers, right through the little choppers, and right around screaming interceptors. Whether it's crunching karate combat, tense underwater tank warfare, or the sizzling laser fights in the best mazes in video, **Golgo 13™** means action. In fact, there's so much action that you'll probably wear down the B-button.



Kid Kool™

In a realm that might have been, in a time that could have been long ago, or just tomorrow, a good king lies dying. The enemies of the north are massing for an attack on his kingdom.

The good king's sorcerer has been searching for magic and out of desperation pulls a rockin' rebel from the eighties back in time. **Kid Kool™** is sent on a quest to help retrieve the seven wonder herbs, the only hope to save the king.



Conflict™

At the break of dawn, the eerie sounds of heavily-laden tanks pierce the morning calm. The metallic reflection in the distance only proves that the sun is bright, but who is it?

Are these tanks the armored support you called for, or has the red machine broken through? There is little time to react. Should you wait till your men are in range, or should you attack them now?

As Commander-in Chief, you've got no time to waste.



The Mafat Conspiracy™

A "StarWars" satellite has been snatched out of earth orbit, the inventor of satellite capture technology has disappeared, the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. are blaming each other, and the world edges toward nuclear oblivion.

Golgo 13 is back just in time. **The Mafat Conspiracy™** is a phantasmagora of action and interaction. Your eyeballs will stretch from their sockets as you speed through Europe in Golgo's Ferrari. Your bones will rattle as you leap across the cars on the Orient Express. And if you think you've seen bad dudes, wait till you feel the power of Duke Togo's wicked karate kick.

The Mafat Conspiracy™ is for those who demand the very best in video games. See it at World of Nintendo, and we'll prove it to you!

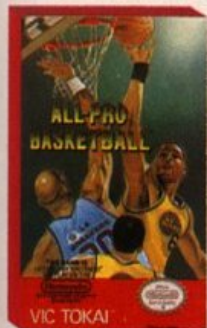
All-Pro Basketball™

Bored with simple-minded one-on-one basketball? Disappointed that only three men on your team can dribble down court? In a foul mood because the guy who made the basketball game you bought seems to be using hockey rules?

If you're a die-hard gym rat who can play the game, and expect your competition to be the same way, then it's time to play ball because **All-Pro Basketball™** has arrived.

All-Pro is true all-court Five-On-Five basketball complete with long-range jumpers, in-your-face stuffs, passes, steals, rebounds, fouls, and even a half-time show.

If you're new to basketball, buy the other games. But if you're a real basketball junkie, leave that weak stuff on your home court, and let's get down to the pro game.



Clash at Demonhead™

Professor Plum and his designs for the dreaded, death-dealing doomsday device, Dead End, are in the clutches of the diabolical Lawbreakers—a sinister society dedicated to the destruction of mankind. It's only a matter of time before the Dead End Device is assembled and the final countdown to global Armageddon begins.

As Sgt. Billy "Big Bang" Blitz—the youngest and gutsiest commando of the Special Assault Brigade for Real Emergencies (S.A.B.R.E)—your mission is to foil the Lawbreakers' insidious plot. To accomplish your mission, you must find the shortest route to the summit of Demonhead Mountain, where the poor professor is being held prisoner. Rescue the professor, and you save the world from total destruction. But if you should fail. . .

Terra Cresta™

Bored with action on earth? Sick of hohumming it around the neighborhood? Need some excitement in your life?

Take off into space with **Terra Cresta™**. You'll be hurled in to space and thrown into a fight with the evil forces of darkness. Only you can break through the enemy's treachery and beat Mandora, the Supreme Commander of the evil that awaits.



GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY




Daedalian Opus™

The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To be beaten is ordinary, to achieve victory is an art.



ENTER THE WORLD of SWORDS & SERPENTS



 Come with us deep into the
Serpent's dungeon... Many
have gone before you; few
have returned. And none
have defeated the evil
Serpent that has brought
terror to your village
for centuries.

masterful
you create

 band of  adventurers - a thief,
a wizard, a mystic and a warrior -
each with special powers.

But the vile inhabitants
of the dungeon have their own
mysterious powers, too.
Step by step, you'll
explore the depths...



gaining
strength,
experience,
weapons, spells
and armour.

Down you'll go-through 16 levels of adventure-each one packed with fabulous treasures, demons and dangerous monsters- we'll even discover the secrets of the Zoom Tubes.

the Zoom Tubes.
Until, at last, you confront
the evil Serpent, coiled and
writhing, waiting to strike.
Will you finally end his reign of
terror... or just be another
one of his victims?

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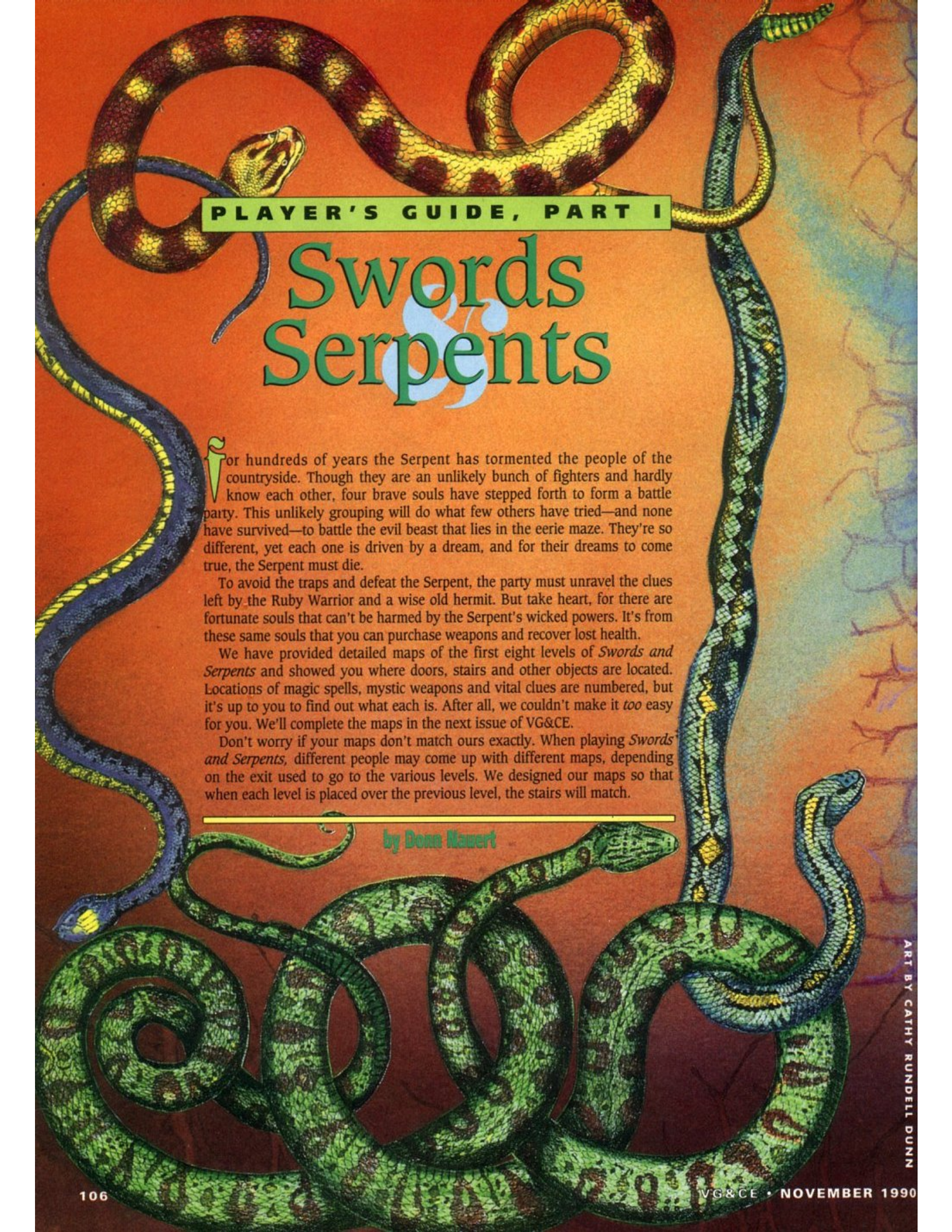
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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD



PLAYER'S GUIDE, PART I

Swords & Serpents

For hundreds of years the Serpent has tormented the people of the countryside. Though they are an unlikely bunch of fighters and hardly know each other, four brave souls have stepped forth to form a battle party. This unlikely grouping will do what few others have tried—and none have survived—to battle the evil beast that lies in the eerie maze. They're so different, yet each one is driven by a dream, and for their dreams to come true, the Serpent must die.

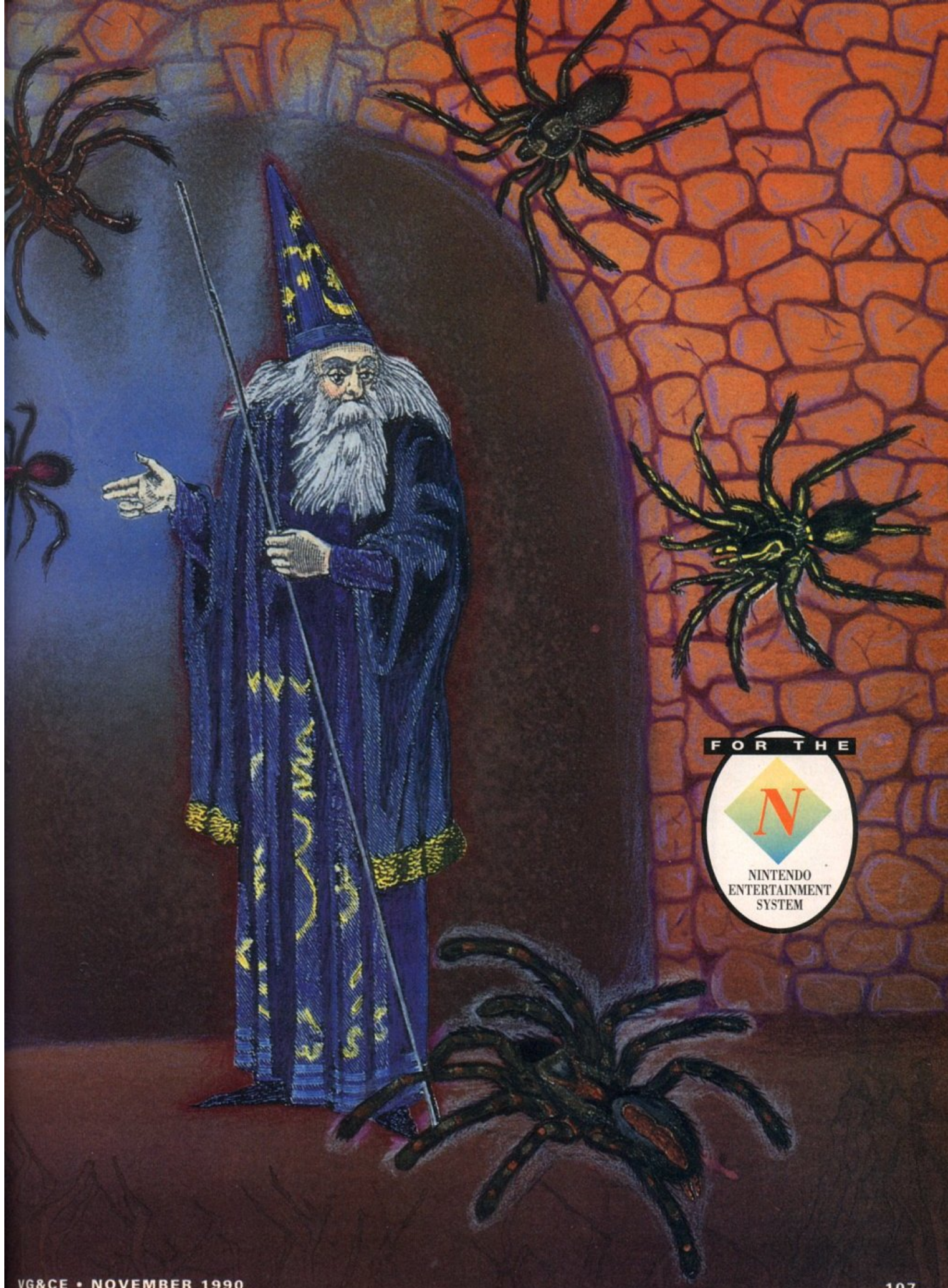
To avoid the traps and defeat the Serpent, the party must unravel the clues left by the Ruby Warrior and a wise old hermit. But take heart, for there are fortunate souls that can't be harmed by the Serpent's wicked powers. It's from these same souls that you can purchase weapons and recover lost health.

We have provided detailed maps of the first eight levels of *Swords and Serpents* and showed you where doors, stairs and other objects are located. Locations of magic spells, mystic weapons and vital clues are numbered, but it's up to you to find out what each is. After all, we couldn't make it *too* easy for you. We'll complete the maps in the next issue of VG&CE.

Don't worry if your maps don't match ours exactly. When playing *Swords and Serpents*, different people may come up with different maps, depending on the exit used to go to the various levels. We designed our maps so that when each level is placed over the previous level, the stairs will match.

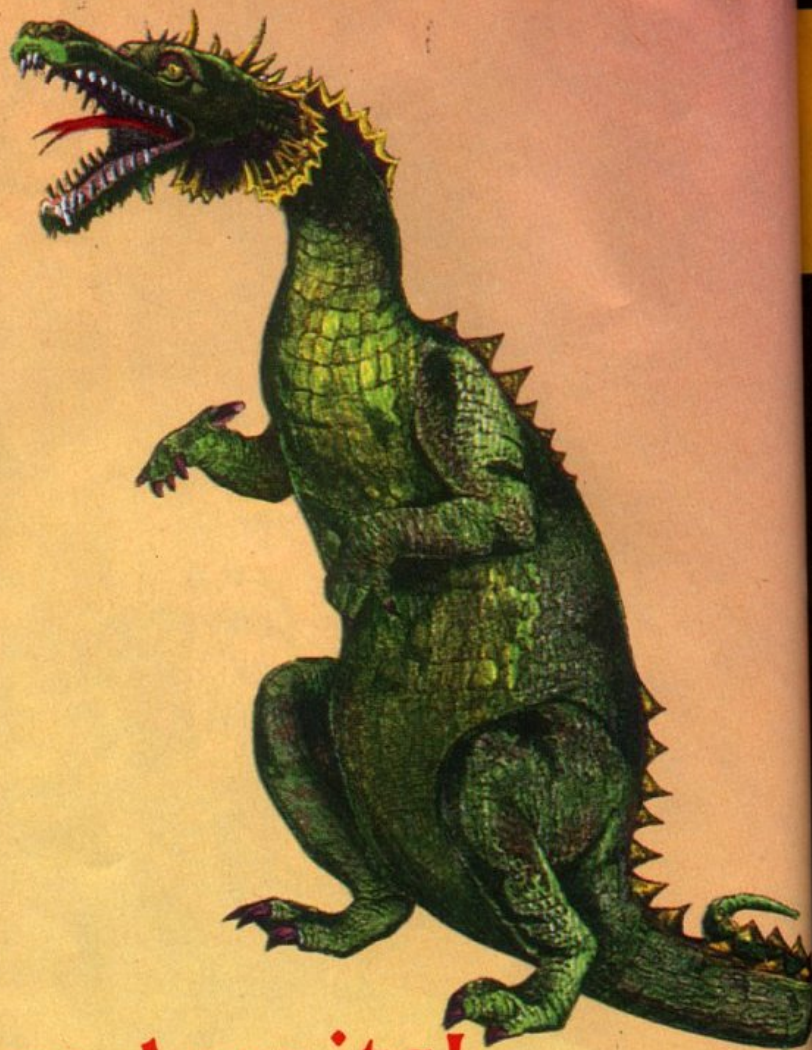
by Donn Hawert

ART BY CATHY RUNDELL DUNN



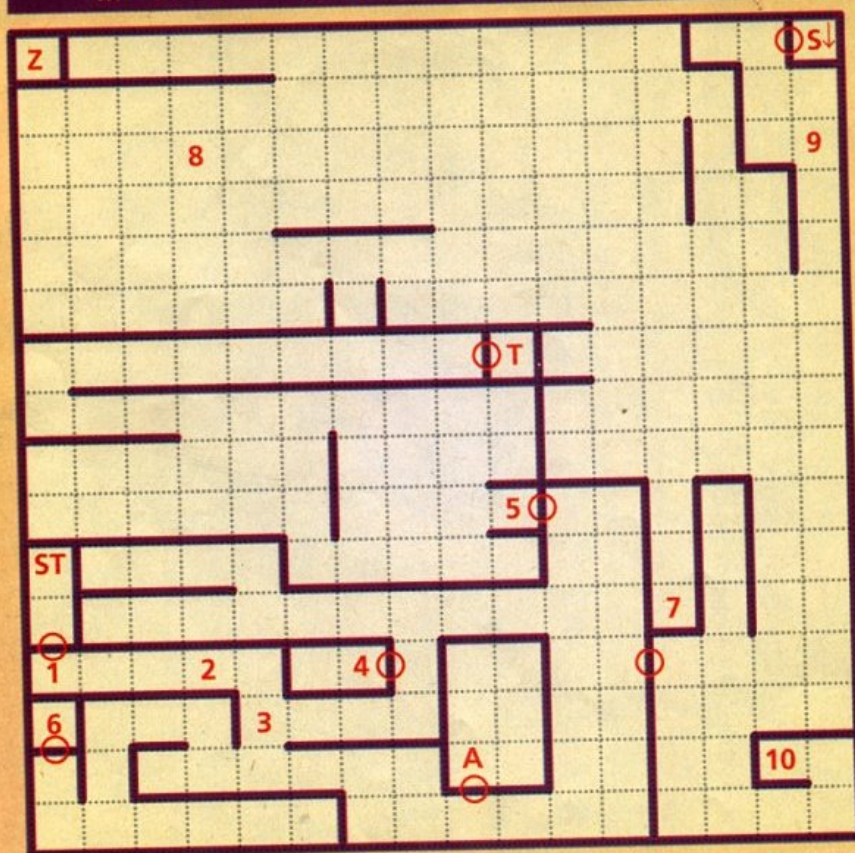
KEY

- T Temple
- A Armory
- Doors
- S Secret Doors
- ↑ Up Staircase
- ↓ Down Staircase
- Z Zoom Tube*
- Teleporter*
- M Magic Fountain
- × Trap
- #1-100 Items, Weapons, Magic Spells
- ST Start
- ⓐ Gold Door
- ⓑ Bronze Door
- * or a location you have been transported to



Destiny Awaits!

MAP OF LEVEL 1



Use this level to get used to the way the game plays and to build your characters for the long journey ahead.

TECMO

Available Now!

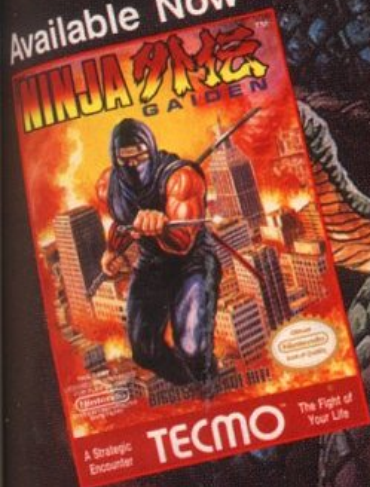
NINJA 外伝 II

GAIDEN

TM

THE DARK SWORD
OF
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The Newest Challenge in the Tecmo Tradition of Skill Games and Strategy

TECMO is proud to introduce another sure winner game for the Nintendo Entertainment System™, featuring outstanding graphics, realism, and control that will keep you on the edge of your seat!

Ninja Gaiden II™ is the continuing action adventure of Ninja Ryu and The Evil Ashtar. Lightning, snow, rain, wind and ice challenge your Ninja skills.

Work your way to the playoffs as you plan your strategy as a coach or player in **Bad News Baseball™** or **Tecmo Bowl™**.

Bad News Baseball™ is the new cartoon-style, outrageously funny baseball game. Choose boys teams or girls teams, and get ready to laugh.

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With **Tecmo World Wrestling**, you can pin your opponent using 36 wrestling moves. You control the action to achieve the world championship.

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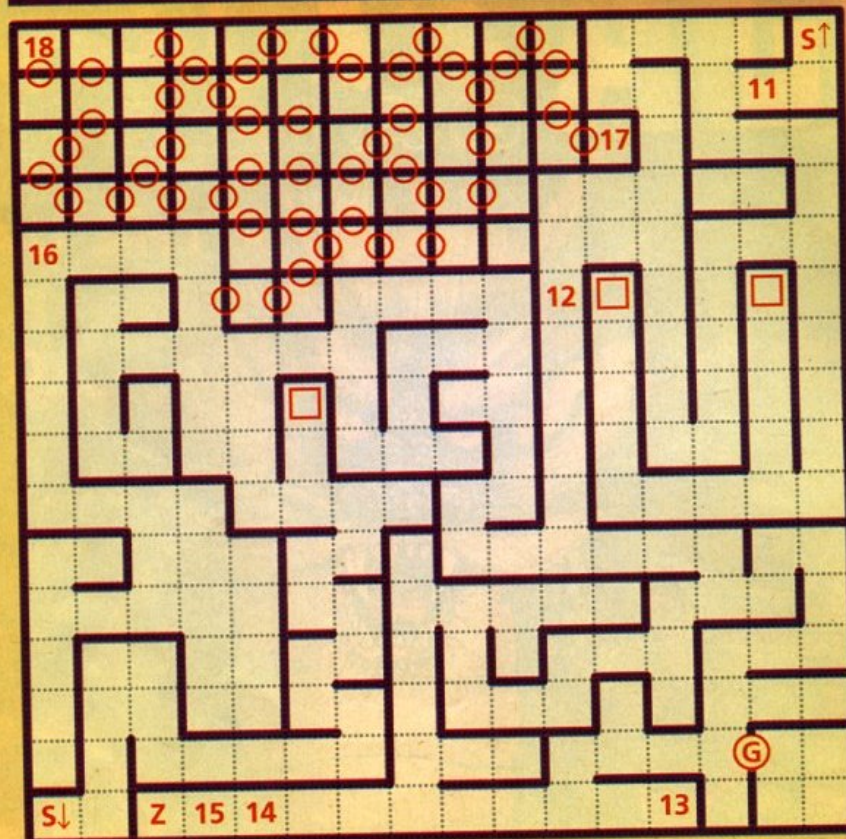
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CIRCLE #145 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Who's Zoomin' Who?

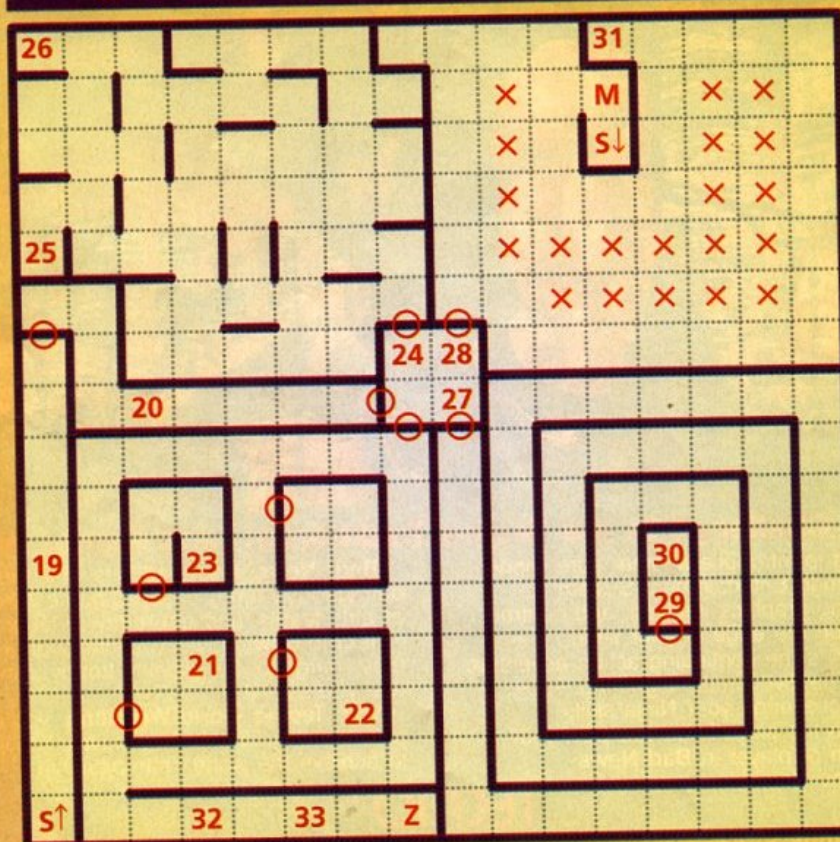
MAP OF LEVEL 2



You can find powerful weapons lying on the floor in this level. To get through the gold door, you must have the gold key.

Threshold!

MAP OF LEVEL 3



Use the remote triggers to unlock the doors of this level. And watch out for the traps located at the upper right.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BEACH VOLLEYBALL

1 TO 4
PLAYERS

SONIC SPIKE™

The action sizzles in **SONIC SPIKE™**, on the front line of the world's most brutal volleyball game. Blast the ball over the net... bump, spike, dig, jump, quick-fake a return. Orbital lobbs soar to the sun; earth-pounding spikes vibrate the ground. Score... or eat sand.

Select and create your own teams from 24 athletes from six nations. Pit gals against guys in a battle of the sexes, or fight the competition of the century with Japan, China, Australia, Brazil, USA, or USSR.

It's co-ed!

SONIC SPIKE™ is non-stop action for one to four players. Play with your friends or play alone. Try three courts of difficulty. If you're really good, you'll earn the challenge of facing "The Mysterious Competitor" in the final match. Pound him into the ground... before he splatters you into the sand!

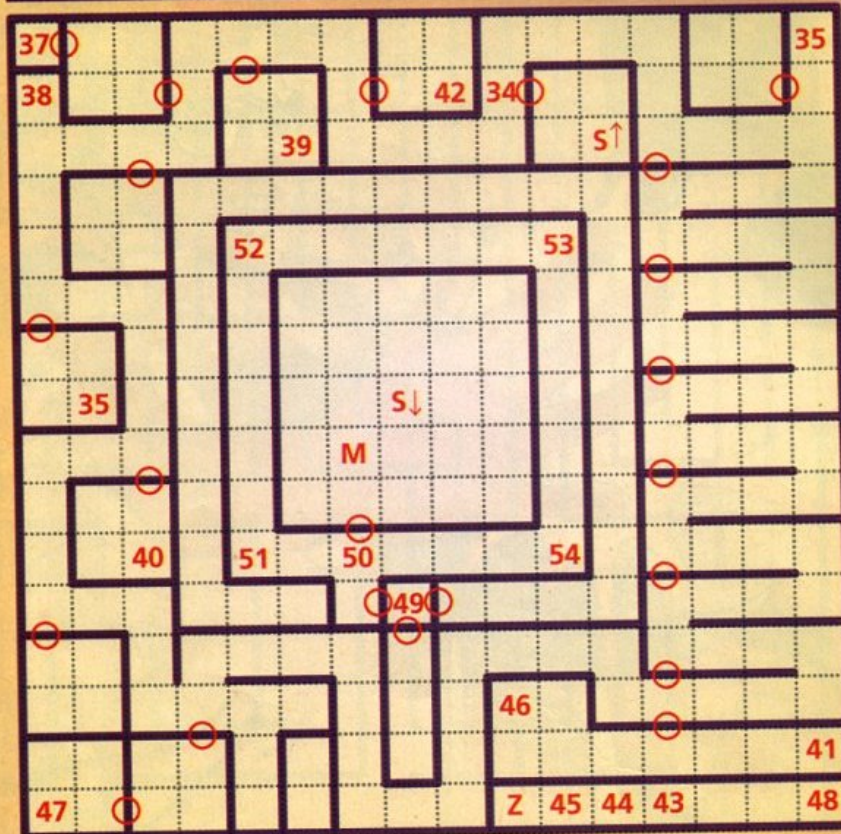
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CIRCLE #146 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Secret Square!

MAP OF LEVEL 4



You must do something special to get the door to open—if you get the hints.



continued on page 11



TOHO CO., LTD.

GODZILLA[®]

GAME BOY[™]



Destroy all rocks
and advance to
the next scene!

Somewhere among 64 scenes
Minilla[™] is confined!



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I'll be back...
ON "GAME BOY"!!

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CIRCLE #147 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Warning: The Fo Chills, Dizziness An



Atari Lynx™ comes with AC adaptor, Comlynx™ cable and four games on one Lynx game cartridge.

Lots of games are available on compact cartridges, with more being developed as we speak.



Gauntlet®: Smash arcade hit. The enchanted Star Gem has crashed to earth. Capture it from evil creatures before they use its magical strength to destroy man. 1 to 4 players.



Blue Lightning™: Fly a top secret com while avoiding missiles, ice field walls and the dark of night.



Plug any stand headset into the L more realistic 4 channel sou

Playing May Cause Shortness Of Breath.



Electrocop™: Rescue the kidnapped daughter of the president. Invade the Steel Complex where dangerous robot traps protect the Criminal Brain.



California Games®: Surf your brains out. Skateboard the Half Pipe. Juggle the Foot Bag. Slam off the desert berms on your BMX bike.

Chip's Challenge™: Help Chip through 144 levels without getting nailed by cherry bombs, water-traps, and hundreds of other hazards.



KLAX™: The latest arcade mega-hit from Atari Games. You must form "Klax" from colored tiles tumbling down the conveyor belt. 100 levels.



Connect up to 8 Lynxes.
On some games, all 8 players can be on screen at once.

The Lynx portable game system is every bit as good as home systems.

It has great color and sharpness like a big screen TV. It has deep levels of play on popular and new games. And on some games, you will be able to link up to eight Lynxes so everybody can play together.

It's enough to give you chills.

And make our competitors sick.

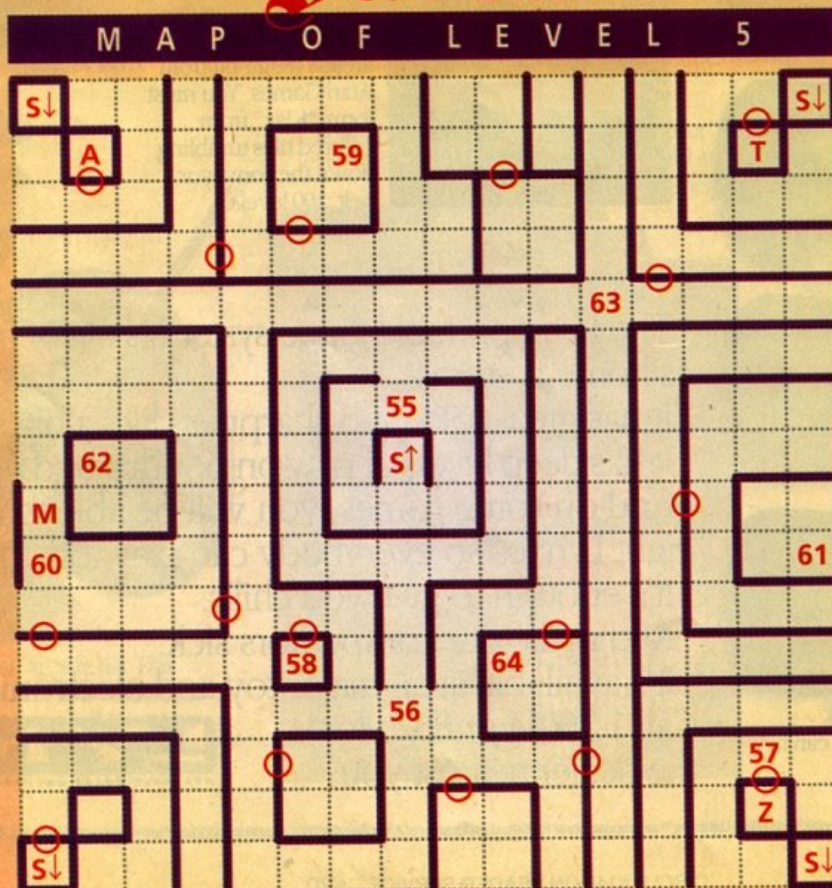
It's available at all major toy and electronic retailers.

Call 1-800-443-8020 for the dealer nearest you.





Haven!



You'll find a temple and an armory on this level. This is also the first level that has a wraparound screen.

ATARI 7800™

ALIEN BRIGADE

The Alien Brigade has entered the Atari 7800 system. Attacking with full frontal fury. Infiltrating your army. Turning your men into slimy zombies.

You've got a war on your hands. You've got to stay alive, man. You've got hostages to rescue. And your weapons are joystick or light gun controlled. So start wasting 'em. But be careful, you could be 86ing your own men.



One of the new games for the Atari 7800. Now oozing its way to a store near you.



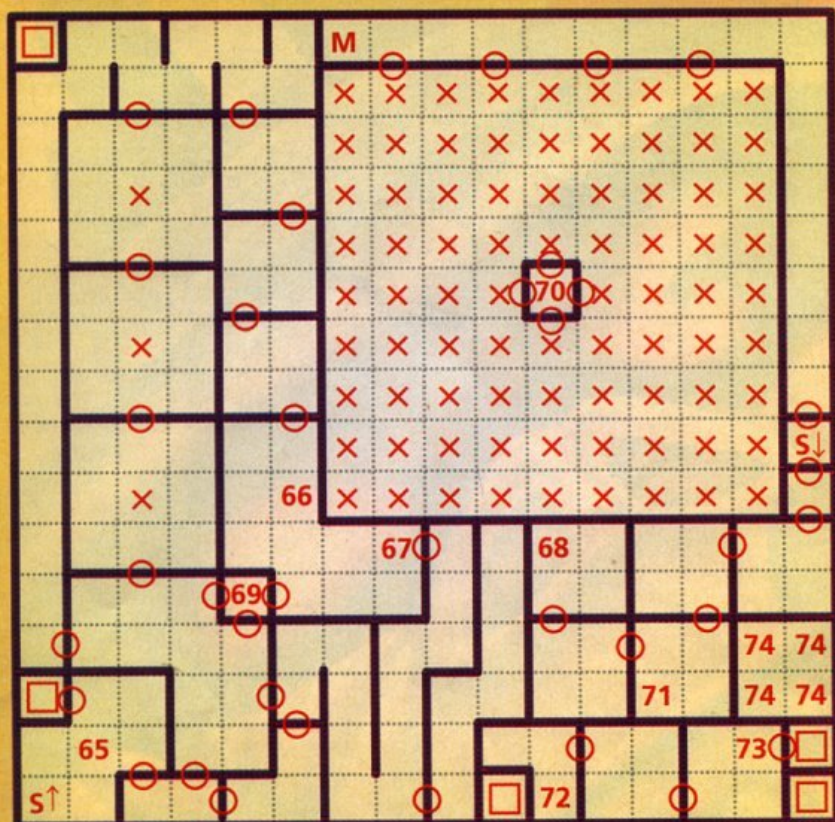
AN ALIEN IS A WONDERFUL THING TO WASTE.



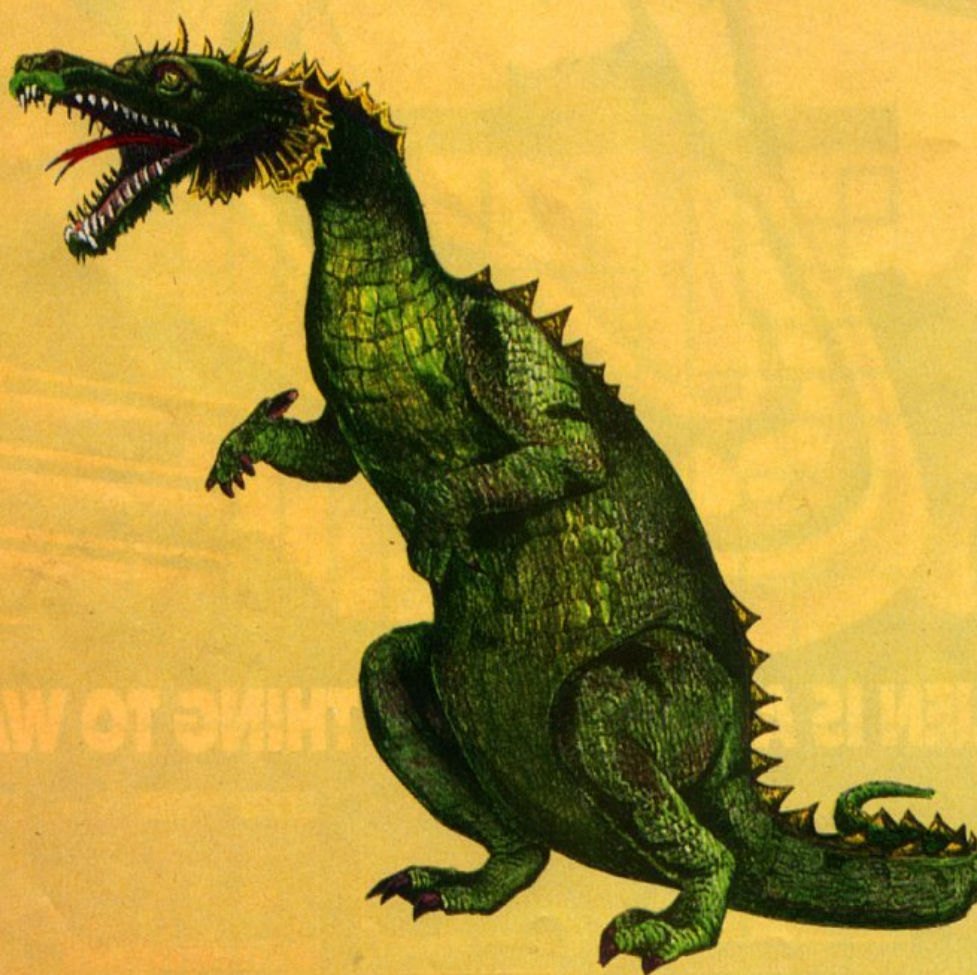
CIRCLE #149 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Shocker

MAP OF LEVEL 6



There are some secret levels on this stage that contain some important items. If you're light on your feet, you can avoid the electric floors.





ATARI 7800™

IKARI WARRIORS

You are the Ikari warrior on the Atari 7800 system.

You go behind enemy lines with nothing but machine guns, tanks, grenades and a prayer. You and your buddy wipe out the enemy, dodging bullets, knives and missiles. You have to rescue the colonel from an impenetrable fortress. And ammo is running low. Yes, war is hell. But you can handle it—

with one or two players.

One of the new games for Atari 7800. Try it. If you're man enough.

THE BOYS ARE MAKING HOUSECALLS.



THE FINEST IN STRATEGIC GAME

SHINGEN THE RULER™

**YOU ARE THE RULER,
MASTER OF YOUR
OWN FATE.**

Now enter SHINGEN'S dream of total domination. Riflemen, Lancers, Cavalry and Ninja spies are waiting for your commands on 42 different battlefields. Only your skill shall determine victory or defeat.

The country has been torn apart into 21 different territories. Only through your strength and wisdom as a ruler will it be restored to its former Greatness! As ruler of 2 territories and commander of a vast army, the POWER is in your hands to attack and conquer the other 19 territories.

**NOW...ENTER SHINGEN'S
DREAM OF DOMINATING ALL!**



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CIRCLE #151 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Players interested in games of this type may want to give this one a shot. On the other hand, while *Psychosis* definitely has its share of challenge, a weak storyline simply won't elevate it above the rank of ordinary.

—Brent Walker

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

Super Glove Ball

MATTEL

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ever since the release of Mattel's Power Glove a little over a year ago, there haven't been many games specifically designed to utilize its full potential. One idea not initially touched upon, until now, was using the Power Glove as an interactive means for a video-game based on the experimental "virtual reality"—better known as "cyberspace"—research being developed at NASA and other companies. Now, with Mattel's new *Super Glove Ball*, the concept of virtual reality comes one step closer to home.

The background information regarding *Super Glove Ball* is really a lame narrative that was written, it seems, to "justify" what actually is an interactive sports video game with a surrealistic look. The whole pointless story has something to do with your space shuttle being entrapped in a giant 3-D maze made up of rooms consisting of multicolored blocks. With the help of your "robo-glove" hovering outside your craft, you intend to find a way out of your prison.

Super Glove Ball is really a hybrid of handball and a sort of 3-D version of *Arkanoid*. There isn't a space shuttle to be seen nor anything else to give the player the feel of what is supposed to be

Super Glove Ball is Mattel's first attempt to truly create a cartridge that addresses the specific strengths of its Power Glove peripheral.



intergalactic strife—just a clumsily animated star field as the background to the "Game Over" screen.

Using the Power Glove, you maneuver your on-screen robo-glove in a variety of rooms that are usually made up of a ceiling, floor and walls to the game screen's right, left and background. The walls are constructed of brightly colored blocks that you can knock out one by one with an energy ball. You can grab this ball in midair, deflect it or punch it with your robo-glove in a desired direction. In fact, as you move your Power Glove to perform these feats, you almost experience the sense of actually coming into contact with the ball.

But don't let these balls go by your robo-glove—your glove's power charge level will lower. Also, your robo-glove shoots bullets when you point your forefinger. Clear away all the blocks of a wall and, you'll get to go to the next room in the direction of that wall.

You're not left alone in these rooms to do what you please. Bizarre creatures roam these areas to drain your power level. Most can be done away with by hitting them with the energy ball or shooting them. To help you out, hitting blocks bearing a "?" will reward you with special weapons and power items like bombs, ice balls and extra robo-bullets.

A prevailing ailment in *Super Glove Ball* is notorious on-screen flickering. When objects get crowded into a room, they start to flicker. Another problem is the extreme tedium experienced while playing. The maze consists of several scores of rooms. If you encounter a dead end, tough. You'll have to backtrack, and the walls of the rooms you've already been in must be knocked down again. Also, keep in mind that this maze is multileveled. What first begins as a fascinating experience can soon become more stressful to your right arm than a Nautilus machine.

If you've been indecisive on whether or not to add a Power Glove to your NES setup, *Super Glove Ball* itself won't give a strong enough incentive for you to go ahead with the investment. Those who already own the Power Glove, however, might want to take a look at the game, as

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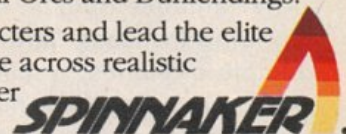


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Gandalf



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well as anyone interested in the elementary aspects of virtual reality. Unfortunately, *Super Glove Ball* and the Power Glove together won't completely satisfy your curiosities of the world of cyberspace, but it will pique your interest in the possibilities.

—Howard H. Wen

Mattel
5150 Rosecrans Ave.
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(800) 421-2887

Final Fantasy

NINTENDO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$42.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Nintendo has shown its ability to construct high-quality, involving role-playing games (a growing genre of video games), and its latest, *Final Fantasy*, follows the formula well.

These days, fantasy role-playing games (RPGs) make claim to a large chunk of the video-game market. Adventures like *Ultima* and *Dragon Warrior* regularly find their place on bestseller lists, probably because they offer much more than just long-term blastathons. These games allow the player to immerse himself in an entire world, exploring strange territory, fighting awesome creatures and solving tricky puzzles.

In Nintendo's new RPG, *Final Fantasy*, you assemble a party of four heroes, each of which has a magical orb. Two thousand years ago, the orbs had glowed with power from within. Now all are dark, and your heroes must bring back the light. Along the way, your adventurers will complete many other smaller quests, including rescuing Princess Sara from the Temple of Fiends, waking the Prince of Elfland and finding a missing crown. If you're familiar with such games as *Ultima*, *Dragon Warrior* or Sega's *Phantasy Star* series, you'll be at home with *Final Fantasy*.

As mentioned above, you start your quest by assembling a party of four heroes. You may choose from 12 "occupations": fighter, knight, thief, ninja, black belt, master, red mage, red wizard,

white mage, white wizard, black mage and black wizard. Each occupation boasts different abilities. A well-rounded party will include both strong fighters and powerful magic users.

Your magic users start out weak, with only a couple of spells. As they grow stronger, however, you will be able to choose from 64 different spells, some defensive and some offensive. Defensive spells allow your magic users to perform such magical feats as healing members of your party or increasing the strength of their armor, while offensive spells allow you to fight with powers like fireballs and lightning.

Magic alone won't win the quest. Your party also needs weapons and armor. You can choose from 40 different types of each. Which you select depends on your characters' occupations and levels. As the

game progresses and your party becomes stronger, you can buy better, more powerful weapons and armor. In addition to your weapons and armor, a slew of other special items aid you in your quest, including potions for healing your warriors, and portable housing for both healing your party and saving their status to the battery-backed-up cartridge.

Most items can be found in the many shops located in each town. There are magic shops, potion shops, armor shops and weapon shops. In addition, you'll find inns in which you can completely restore your adventurers' strength and save your game and clinics in which you can reincarnate dead heroes. Everything has its price, of course. As you fight the many monsters, you gain not only experience levels, but also gold.

Did somebody mention monsters? You bet! Over 130 of

them! Like your heroes, each monster has his own set of abilities and attributes. Some creatures are stupid and slow, easy pickings for even the weakest adventurers. Others are quick-witted and ready for trouble. Some are poisonous. Others enjoy magical abilities. *Final Fantasy's* game world is a dangerous place indeed!

It's also a huge place, containing over 25 important locations: towns, castles, caves, dungeons, secret tunnels and more. You'll need to locate various "vehicles" in



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order to explore the entire map, including a ship, a canoe and even an air balloon.

Final Fantasy comes with a wonderful, full-color 80-page manual that not only teaches the basics of the game, but also provides maps and clues for the first half of the quest. In addition, the game is packed with two poster-sized sheets that provide additional maps, as well as complete monster, armor and weapons charts.

Final Fantasy is role-playing adventure at its best. The many different character types yield a game that can be played again and again, using different strategies. Add to that the large size of the game world, and you've got a quest that'll keep you busy for hundreds of hours. In fact, you may never exhaust its possibilities.

—Clayton Walnum

Nintendo of America, Inc.
P. O. Box 957
Redmond, WA 98073-0957
(206) 882-2040

Dragon's Curse

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$48.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Although the title of this game may not be familiar, upon closer inspection many may recognize this game. Ever hear of *Wonder Boy III*? Outside the different title, this game is pretty much the same.

As Hu-Man—first-place prize for most original name there—you have been locked in Dragon Castle. To escape, you must find your captor, Mecha Dragon, and defeat him. You do so and manage to escape, but with the curse of the dragon upon you. You are transformed into Lizard-Man, and the only way that you can be transformed back into your original handsome self is to find the legendary Salamander Cross, which has the power to cure you and bring peace to the land. In order to find it, you must fight your way through five different dragons and their many minions.



Dragon's Curse, by NEC for the TurboGrafx-16, requires you to take your on-screen counterpart, Hu-Man, through his trek to find the Salamander Cross, the item that will remove the curse of Mecha Dragon.

To help you on your way, you have ten different swords, shields and armors. You only start with one set however—the others must be found in the shops scattered throughout the land. Gold must be accumulated to help in the purchase of these weapons and pay for health boosts that are

available in some shops. Health may also be restored by small and large hearts that are found by killing enemies. Other appearing items include medicine vials, charisma stones and keys. Special weapons such as fire balls, tornados, arrows, boomerangs and thunder

(similar in effect to a weak smart bomb) are also available to aid in your quest.

The five dragons are each secreted away inside their respective kingdoms. Sea World, Desert World, Jungle World, Cave World and Sky World must all be invaded and explored to find each dragon's hiding place. To complicate matters even more, some of these areas are inaccessible in your lizard form. To access these areas, you must change between five different characters: Lizard-Man, Mouse-Man, Piranha, Tiger-Man and Hawk-Man.

Each has different characteristics that give advantages in fighting and traveling through certain landscapes. For example, as Mouse-Man you can walk up walls, and even ceilings, and travel through tiny tunnels. As Hawk-Man, you can simply fly across the landscapes, and avoid many of the monsters completely—just don't go near the water! That's for Piranha, a powerful swimmer who's perfect in the underwater areas. Lion-Man is a powerful fighter with a huge swing, handy in wiping out enemies quickly.

As you gain gold and charisma stones and build up your health capacity, you will have the opportunity to gain the most powerful weapons. Each has an offensive power rating of the damage it will do to your opponents. The armor and shield have defensive ratings, which pertain to the amount of damage they shield you

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from. Both are crucial to advancing to the higher levels of the game and are often a challenge just to find.

Visually, *Dragon's Curse* is diverse; there's different scenery for each dragon kingdom and well-drawn characters. The graphics are interesting and pleasing as a whole, and the color palette changes from area to area. The music varies throughout, and adds to the atmosphere of each area without distracting or becoming annoying. The game plays well and with enough variety to hold your interest. A password feature is available to save your game stats, and a password file lets you store multiple passwords as long as you have the power on.

Dragon's Curse is a well-made game, and those that haven't already played *Wonder Boy III* into the ground would do well to give this version a look.

—B. W.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

Low G Man

TAXAN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Taxan's *Low G Man* is what I like to call a "guy game." A "guy game" is an arcade adventure that lets you control a guy who runs around shooting, jumping, punching, whipping and/or stabbing everything that gets in his way. The best "guy games" make use of every available programming trick and clever idea that would add variety to the basic concept. In other words, they'll go out of their way to distract you from the fact that they're all essentially the same game!

Low G Man's designers have made this title much more interesting than the average "guy game." Of course, *Low G Man* is definitely not an average guy. The "G" stands for gravity. He's one of an elite group of futuristic warriors who have been extensively trained in the use of the 23rd century's most revolutionary invention: the low-gravity backpack. I'll spare you the



Taxan's *Low G Man* is a standard video game with a new twist thrown in: The main character is part of an organization of warriors equipped with special low-gravity backpacks.

background story that appears in the instruction manual; the on-screen summary that precedes the game is unbelievably concise: "It was a robot-producing exploration planet like any other. Large cities, beautiful sunsets. But then they came...we'll send in Low G Man!"

As *Low G Man* makes his way through the alien-infested planet of robots, he can stun his opponents with his electromagnetic disrupter pistol before putting them away with his armor-piercing spear. Interestingly, the pistol only fires left or right, and the spear can only be used when you're above or below an enemy. There are also four optional weapons, which are powered-up by some of the many items that the vanquished creatures

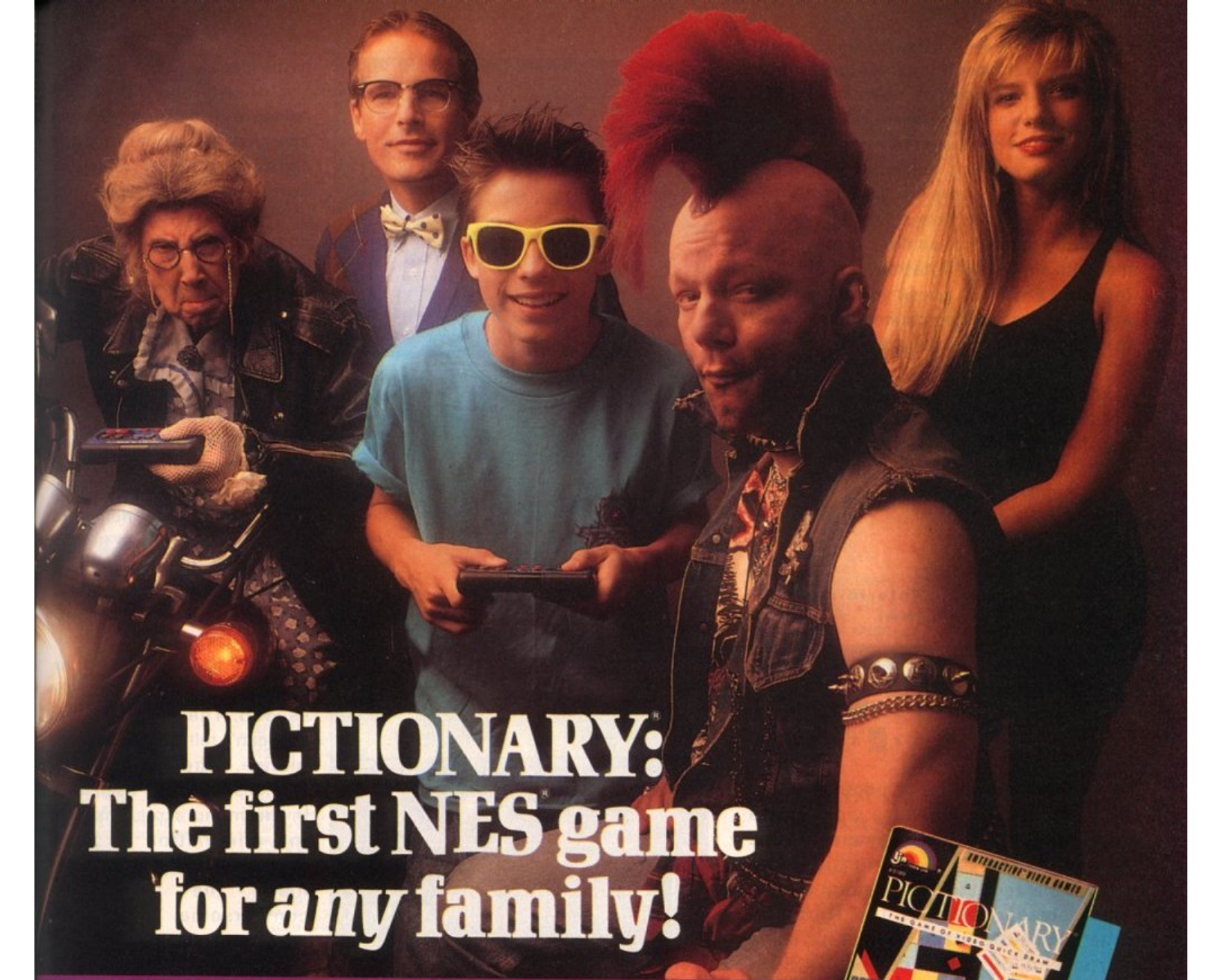
leave behind. If you stun an alien before you take him out with your spear, you might get one of these items—but if you can spear one without using the stun-gun, you'll always get a power-up.

Another of the game's impressive features is demonstrated when you encounter an alien who is piloting a walker, hover or

spider vehicle. If you beat the creature who's inside one of these machines, you can climb aboard and use it yourself for a limited time. This is a perfect example of the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink mentality that makes this type of game a success.

Unfortunately, all of these great ideas don't mean a thing if they're not presented properly, and it's here that *Low G Man* falls flat. One of the game's biggest faults is the poor animation of the main character. *Low G Man* is colorful and detailed, but his movements are extremely jerky, and that makes it hard to control him accurately. The scrolling of the background is also poor; the scenery doesn't move smoothly enough to give the game the slick, professional appearance that it could have had.

These two flaws are magnified by one of the game's most important elements: *Low G Man*'s ability to jump higher than the top of the screen. The "camera" follows him when he makes one of these superhuman leaps, which means that the background is scrolling in two different directions—and it just doesn't look good. But the music definitely covers up a lot of



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the game's shortcomings. It's got one of those fast-paced, frantic soundtracks that can make a dull game seem exciting, and this was not a dull game to begin with.

It can't be denied that *Low G Man* has some serious problems, and that's the reason why it can't be called one of the best "guy games" of all time. But even so, it's been in "heavy rotation" on my NES for quite a while. I guess you have to be able to appreciate the concept even when the execution isn't quite as good.

—C. B.

Taxan USA Corporation
161 Nortech Parkway
San Jose, CA 95134
(408) 946-3400

Dragon Warrior II

ENIX
For the Nintendo Entertainment
System (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

After a long period of popularity and profitability, the Japanese video-game audience is finally losing interest in the Famicom. The Famicom is the game system that took the U.S. by storm when it was released here as the Nintendo Entertainment System. Though it's being surpassed by more powerful 16-bit systems in its native country, there are still a few games that are keeping it alive there. One of the most important is *Dragon Quest*, a series of role-playing adventures that seem to increase in popularity with each new "chapter."

In case you haven't guessed, *Dragon Quest* was renamed *Dragon Warrior* for the U.S. market, and Enix is now releasing the second game in the series. This installment tells the tale of Hargon, an evil sorcerer who intends to conquer the medieval lands of Cannock, Midenhall and Moonbrooke. As a descendant of the hero from the first *Dragon Warrior* game, you must fight Hargon's disciples and protect these three lands, which have been ruled by your ancestors for more than a century. You'll be joined by the Princess of Moonbrooke and the Prince of Cannock on your mission, and together the three of you will travel, talk, fight and eventually



Dragon Warrior II, by Enix, is the second in the Dragon Quest series of RPG video games that are extremely popular with Famicom players in Japan.

battle Hargon to the death!

Unlike some other NES role-playing titles, *Dragon Warrior II* requires little control-pad ability. This may be one of the reasons for the game's overseas popularity—you don't have to be a nimble-fingered joystick jockey to do well. It does get very frustrating when you're trying to talk to a character who refuses to hold still long enough for you to face him/her and issue the talk command, but for the most part, the game is almost entirely menu-driven. When you encounter an enemy, you are presented with a number of options, like fight, run or parry, and you can take as long as you wish to make your decision.

If you liked the first game, you will definitely enjoy the second. They're so similar, you can't tell them apart at a glance. There are a few changes that have been made in the menu screen: namely, the elimination of a few unnecessary commands that made the first game cumbersome. The territory you must explore is much more expansive; according to

the instruction manual, it's at least four times larger than the land of Alefgard in the first *Dragon Warrior*.

Unfortunately, the "fighting" mode is not as well-done as it was previously, despite the improvements that allow attacks by groups of enemies instead of just one. Unlike the colorful battle screens in the first game, which showed your enemies against an appropriate background, the fighting in *Dragon Warrior II* takes place on a plain, black screen. The "multiple enemy" battles are awkward, too—it looks strange when a group of completely dissimilar creatures shows up, and the text window explains, "A Drakee, two Big Slugs and an Iron Ant appear." Hey, guys—let's have a party!

It's hard to criticize *Dragon Warrior II*. On the day the third installment was released in Japan, kids waited in line for hours just to buy a copy, and many of



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- ☐ MILLIPEDE
- ☐ MILON'S SECRET CASTLE
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them had the game stolen by muggers as they walked home with it! Although this type of video-game hysteria is unheard of in America, you can bet that the series will prove to be popular here. But I can't help thinking that when the NES is dead and buried, historians will look at games like *Dragon Warrior II* and scratch their heads, wondering what all the fuss was about.

—C. B.

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Y's—Books I & II

NEC

CD-ROM for the NEC TurboGrafx-16
(\$61.99)
(TurboGrafx-CD Player required)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This graphic adventure is one of the most detailed, involved games I have ever played. Taking on the role of Adol, a red-haired lad armed with sword in hand, you set out in search of the six ancient books and to defeat the evil Dark Fact. Your boat lands in Minea Town, where you can build up your weapons and get some clues as to what is going on. You then set out across the land of Esteria, where you'll have to locate and explore the abandoned mine, a large shrine, the town of Zepic and, finally, Darm Tower.

Repeated visits to Minea will be necessary to get the additional items you'll need to get into Darm Tower, and heavy trading with the Esterian locals is part of the trick to get you there. You'll also have to locate most of the treasure chests scattered all over and find other items only by listening carefully to clues given by the Esterian inhabitants. Along the way, monster trees, wolf packs and all kinds of meanies will try and stop you, so your strength must be kept up.

Finally, you'll—hopefully—make it to Darm and climb the 25 or so levels to get to the top, where Dark Fact is waiting. Nearly each level is filled with danger and nasty surprises, like the Hall of Mirrors in Darm or the ghosts or grape people who live in the mine. Adol will also confront



Proving that the TurboGrafx-CD Player isn't a gimmick, Y's—Books I & II demonstrates how a CD's expanded storage capacity can enhance a video game.



myriad mini-bosses throughout that game, each with its own unique weak spot that must be taken advantage of. Without defeating the mini-bosses, you won't get necessary items, and you won't proceed further into the game. If you don't have all of the silver items by the time you confront Fact, you are toast.

After defeating Fact it's on to Y's Book II! But not so fast—the game has an "intermission" that shows your journey to the floating land in the sky. Here you must find six new books in the ruins under the town of Rance, then locate the statues of the Ancient Priests of Y's, and return the books to them. Then your real journey begins through the world of ice caves, lava world and, finally, to the town of Ramia. From there you'll enter Solomon's Shrine, a vast castle with underground canals. Here you'll eventually come face to face with the final challenge.

During the game Adol must gather dozens of items to fight the evil forces, including different magic wands that allow him to shoot fireballs, stop enemies in their tracks, transport him to different places and turn into one of the Goons. All these are in addition to the shield, swords and armor he needs. Some of the items are imaginative; for instance, Adol can use a seashell to get verbal help from an old man in a house or special earrings that allow him to hear faint conversations and on and on. (Neat stuff.)

The graphics in Y's are just as great, but the whole game appears better than it really is because of the music. Y's has the best musical soundtrack I have ever heard! The dozens of scores are all on the CD. If I have to give Y's a 10 for the sound/music rating, then the next best game I ever play with good music will probably get a 1. The intro to the game

itself is so good, I find myself watching it over and over again. This is the first game worthy of being put on CD and the best reason to buy the TurboGrafx-CD Player if you don't have one. No one can ever claim that CD-ROM games are just a gimmick ever again!

—Lee Pappas

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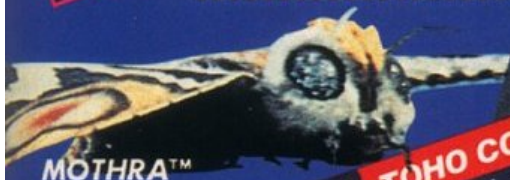
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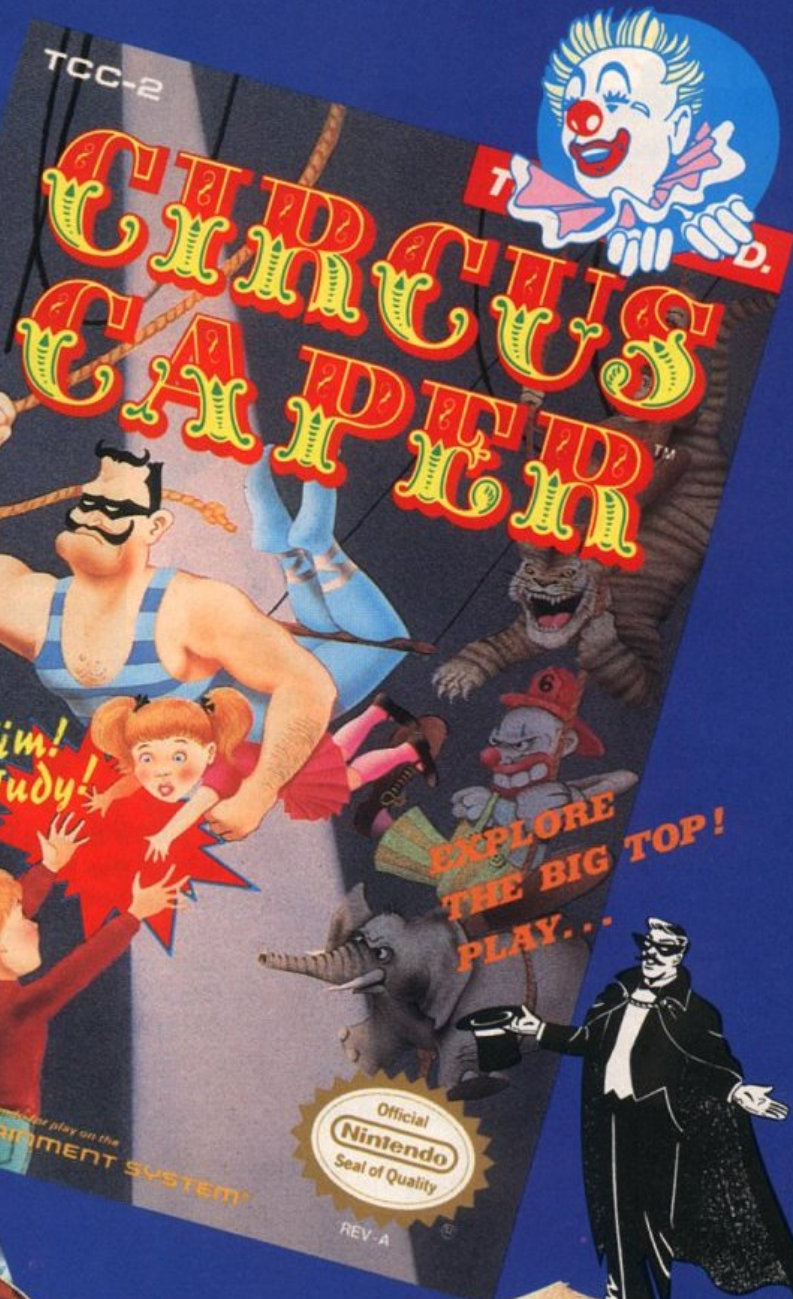


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Super Volleyball

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$48.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Now's your chance to take those beachside volleyball skills and attempt to claim the world championship. Do you have the right stuff? In NEC's new *Super Volleyball* for the TurboGrafx-16, you match ball-bopping talent against the top teams in the world as you vie for first place in the World League. Or, if the pressure gets too intense, just kick back with a single game against a friend (that is, if you have the TurboTap accessory and an extra controller).

While many video sports games suffer from a clumsy user/game interface, *Super Volleyball* gives the player just enough control to make the game fun, without overwhelming him with options. When the ball comes over the net, control automatically switches to the appropriate player, so you have to worry only about the player being in the right position to receive the ball and time the hit well.

Still, when you first sit down with the game, even the easier opponents are difficult to play against. Before frustration sets in, I recommend that you go to the game's option menu and set the ball's speed to slow. Then maybe you'll be able to return some of those face-smashing spikes of which your computer opponents are so fond! Other game attributes that may be set are the beginning score (normally, the teams start with ten points each and need only five points to win a game) and the score handicaps.

At the beginning of the game, if you choose the "normal" game mode, you can play single matches against any team. This mode is good for practicing, since you can take on the same team repeatedly, until you've learned all their tricks. In the "World League" mode, you get your chance to claim the world championship by challenging each of the world's top teams.

There are eight teams in the World League, each of which is described in the manual. Some teams are a snap to beat;

NEC's *Super Volleyball* brings the popular sport to the TurboGrafx-16 with lots of options, a comfortable user interface and, most of all, loads of athletic action on-screen.



others play like demons. Novice players must be sure to pick easy opponents, or they'll get creamed!

Once the game commences, you can manipulate your controller to perform a variety of serves and

returns. Four serves are available: overhand, underhand, jump and drop. By pressing specific arrows on the control pad when returning a ball, you can opt to tap the ball over the net or slam it. Depending on how long you wait to hit the ball (try too soon or wait too long, and you'll miss), a huge variety of hits may be performed. Even blocks and feints are possible.

For additional challenge, take advantage of *Super Volleyball*'s editor, which allows you to invent a custom team. You choose the team's name and uniform color, after which you create your players, one by one. Attributes that can be set include the player's name and number, as well as four characteristics: spiking power, serving power, receiving power and blocking power.

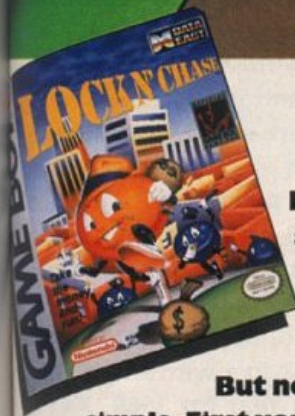
The graphics used in *Super Volleyball*, while not awe-inspiring, are competent. The crowd in the stands looks almost as if it was digitized from a real photo. In addition, the animations are fluid and realistic.

All in all, *Super Volleyball* is a good, challenging simulation. If you've a hankering to take your place among the world's volleyball heroes, *Super Volleyball* may be right in your league.

—C. W.

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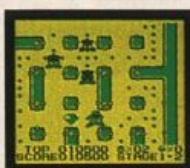
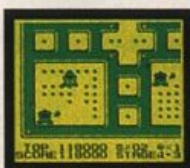
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NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$51.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Two brothers fight it out for the throne to the Ancient Kingdom, but the older brother, Prince Zach, has called upon the forces of evil to defeat his younger brother, Prince Sirius. All is lost until Sirius discovers the legendary Royal Sword, a weapon with magical powers. *Legendary Axe II* begins with Prince Sirius preparing to enter the gate to the Royal Palace, where the evil creatures await him.

Legendary Axe II was originally designed in Japan as a separate game, though slight modifications were made to it so that it could be released in the U.S. as the sequel to the best-selling *Legendary Axe*. In the original game you whopped the enemies with your trusty axe, but in *Legendary Axe II* your best all-around weapon is a sword. However, a powerful axe is also available, as well as a sickle and chain for whacking adversaries. *Axe II*, like the original, is a one-player game.

By collecting power capsules, your weapon power is upgraded, which is indicated by a red bar graph at the top right of the screen. This only happens when you keep the same weapon and don't opt for another. If you switch weapons, the power reverts back to single bar (out of a potential of five). You can also increase your "life" capacity by adding more gems, just like in the original. A maximum of ten life gems are possible.

One major twist compared to the original game is the timer. You must get through a level within a specified time limit or your character loses a life. With some of the level bosses taking a bit of work to kill, you'll most likely run out of time at least a few instances.

Another twist is the Magic Bombs. Pressing the **START** button releases a bomb that blows up everything around it.

Legendary Axe II, NEC's sequel to VG&CE's Best Video Game of 1989, alters the formula used in the original, pitting Prince Sirius against his older brother.



That is, assuming you've collected bombs along the way. (As a side note, using the **START** button for bombs was awkward, because most TG-16 games use that button for pausing, which in this case is enabled with the **SELECT** button. It would have been just as easy to set the **SELECT** button as the bomb trigger and stick to the standard configuration.)

Most of the creatures in the game are your typical monsters à la *Splatterhouse* or any other hack-'em game. Overall, the enemies aren't as imaginative as in *Legendary Axe*. The music is far inferior to the original, and the same goes for the graphics.

There is also a lot less to do in *Axe II*, compared to its predecessor. Here, there isn't any rope swinging, rock monsters,



flipping lizards, giant spiders or jumping frog men. Visually, *Axe* had some of the most beautiful visual backgrounds I have ever seen in a game; in fact, some almost looked like photographs. The visuals in *Axe II* are kind of blah.

Game play isn't on a par to *Axe* either. The first game was really fun to play—even when you were killed off, it was fun to restart and go again. Some of the areas in *Axe II* are somewhat tough to get through and not even the least bit fun to play. There were times I got killed and just shut my TG-16 off to do something else. I was so frustrated that I felt I was wasting my time.

All this is too bad, because though the original *Legendary Axe* warranted Best Video Game of the Year for 1989, *Axe II* won't even come close to making that list this year. As a stand-alone this game is fair, but as a sequel to *Axe*—well, it just doesn't cut it.

—L. P.

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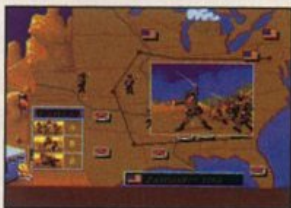
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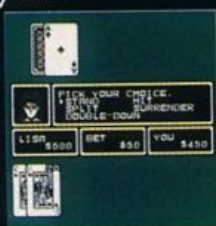
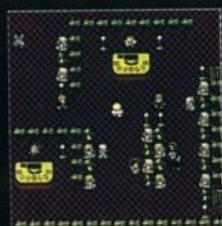
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Games that go...

BUMP in The NIGHT!

A Look at the Year's Most Chilling Software

BY BILL KUNKEL AND JOYCE WORLEY



It's that time of year again. Frost is on the pumpkin, the harvest moon is shining, children everywhere are considering this year's Halloween costume and gamers are scouring the shelves for electronic entertainment to put them in a spooky mood.

Since the last survey of the scary software scene (see "Spooky Software," VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, November '89), the market has been deluged with new entries. Games that give us goosebumps, led by a number of movie licenses that attempt to bring cinematic thrills to video and computer games, now hold a hot corner of the electronic-entertainment universe. In addition, there are the usual spooky adventures and monster-themed arcade games.

What we will not look at in this feature are the dozens of horizontally scrolling video games employing monsters that are not overtly scary. Nor will we examine the zillion role-playing games featuring dragons, orcs and other fantastic creatures. Again, it is not the primary intent of these games to scare users; they simply make use of monsters in the course of otherwise standard RPG action.

At the Movies

Unquestionably, the big growth area for spooky software is movie adaptations. Recent months have seen announcements and/or releases of such movie-licensed chillers as Clive Barker's *Nightbreed* and *Hellraiser*, *Ghostbusters 2* and *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*.

British writer/director Clive Barker, the hottest young talent in the horror marketplace, makes his video-game debut with Color Dreams' NES version of *Hellraiser*, while Ocean Software has two versions of his *Nightbreed* for computer. *Hellraiser*, the story of a man whose relentless search for pleasure takes him to the pits of hell, makes use of the mysterious cube that appeared in the short story (*The Hellbound Heart*) and in the film versions as a gaming device.

Various configurations of the cube open access points to the nightmare realm inhabited by Pinhead and his Cenobite buddies. The Cenobites are the hell-spawned creatures who fulfill the promise of the cube, to produce the ultimate pleasure for the user, in a most ironic way: It turns out that "ultimate pleasure" is actually momentary surcease from the most unspeakable agony. In other words, hit yourself in the head with a hammer, and it feels so good when you stop.

Individuals who solve the puzzle of the cube are seized, skinned and dismembered by the fun-loving Cenobites, who then hang their victim's still-living flesh on a grotesque merry-go-round constructed of wooden beams, chains and meathooks. It is doubtful that much of *Hellraiser's* more gruesome content will be transported to the NES game. The cubes and the Cenobites will certainly be on hand, however. *Hellraiser* will be the first Color Dreams game to use the company's new cartridge-based technology that theoretically advances NES software to 16-bit levels.

Nightbreed is a different kettle of corpses. Its hero, Boone, is running from the law and from himself when he finds himself in Midian, the legendary subterranean home of the Nightbreed, an ancient race of fantastic creatures long hidden from the sight of



humankind. The game and film are based on an original story concerning Boone's attempts to adjust to life as an initiate of the Nightbreed and, later, his efforts to defend Midian from invasion by outside forces. Ocean, Electronic Arts' newest affiliate publisher, offers both a horizontally scrolling arcade version and a role-playing game based on the *Nightbreed* saga for Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC computers.



Ghostbusters II (Activision for computer, NES and Game Boy) follows the film's plot closely: Vigo, the Scourge of Carpathia, is trapped inside his portrait at the Museum of Modern Art, and he's kicking and screaming trying to get out. Supernatural phenomena are occurring all over New York City. Things are so bad that the city is even willing to forgive the Ghostbusters,

who are besieged by lawsuits stemming from their activities in the first film as the sequel begins.

Once again the 'Busters strap on their proton packs and head to the Museum of Modern Art in their faithful Ecto-1A.

When that breaks down, they board the Statue of Liberty and guide her down Fifth Avenue like one of those Japanese warrior robots, in a memorable graphic sequence. Finally, the Ghostbusters arrive at the Museum and battle Vigo himself in the game's climactic scenario.

Horror is often mixed with comedy in films. The laughs take the edge off the shudders and give the flick access to a wider audience. Two examples of the most popular chills-and-chuck-

Sega has released *Ghostbusters* for its Genesis system, and Saitek Simulations is offering a tabletop stand-alone game called *The Real Ghostbusters*. The Sega game is a side-perspective, multidirectionally scrolling action-adventure not based on either of the *Ghostbusters* movies. Instead, it mixes a variety of elements, including the gigantic Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man, to produce a generic

Ghostbusters adventure in which the spook chasers must deghost a series of houses and apartments. Then they must track the manifestations to their source: a creepy old castle. Inside it is a mystical jewel as well as the spook who's causing all the problems, Arthur the Evil Knight.

Saitek's *Real Ghostbusters* is a delightful looking tabletop game for one to four players. Gamers compete individually or as a team in an



Top right: Electronic Arts' *Hound of Shadows*
Above: Lucasfilm's *Maniac Mansion*
Below: Artronic Software's *Frightmare*

les approach are the *Ghostbusters* and *Gremlins* films. Both original movies were big hits with sequels released during the past year, and both were also the subject of electronic games.

While Activision's *Ghostbusters* was a major success in numerous computer and video-game formats, becoming one of the few electronic games to sell over a million total units, the *Gremlins* property didn't fare so well. *Gremlins* was developed by Atari for its then-new 7800 game machine, and when the 7800 flopped, this excellent game got lost in the shuffle.



effort to clear four spooks from a haunted house. One of this stand-alone's most unique features is its use of sound; speech, screams, howls and other audio effects enhance the gaming experience.

In case you were wondering how this *Real Ghostbusters* license developed, after the first film, an animation studio purchased the rights to use the name, but not the characters, from the film. They created their own cast of Ghostbusters, which includes a car-driving gorilla. When the actual Ghostbusters characters were later licensed, the "Real" was added in order to avoid confusion.

Gremlins 2—The New Batch, from Sunsoft for the NES, is a multidirectionally scrolling contest in which Gizmo must save the world from his cousins, the malevolent Gremlins. This time, the scaly little fun-seekers have broken into a genetics-research facility and used the laboratory's designer genes to forge an entirely new breed with powers and abilities far beyond those of ordinary Gremlins.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the new movie-based horror games deals with not one, but two of the hottest monsters of the decade. Activision's *Aliens vs. Predator* for the NES is a monster fan's dream match. It pits 20th Century-Fox's most popular extraterrestrial house horrors against one another in a kind of Venusian death match.

The inspiration for this innovative license actually comes from Dark Horse Comics, which initially developed the concept in a limited series comic book. Kids have been musing about "Which monster is toughest?" for years now, and it looks like we'll finally get a chance to find out.

Through the Glass, Darkly

Adventures with a horror theme continue to be popular. They constitute a healthy subgenre within the adventure-game universe. We've even begun to see sequels to some of the more popular goosebump-inducing adventures.

Transylvania III: Vanquish the Night



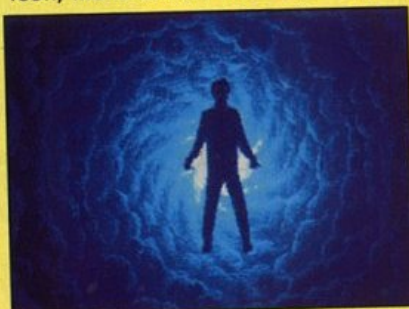
is actually the third in the Polarware series that began with *Transylvania* in the early '80s and was followed by *Crimson Crown* a year or so later. In



Above: Sterling Silver's *Don't Go Alone*
Below: MicroProse's *Weird Dreams*

Transylvania III the player is urgently summoned to Slavaria by Prince Erik. The vampire nobleman Drakul is back, and Erik requires assistance to end his undead existence forever. These illustrated text adventures are currently published by Dallas-based Merit Software.

Another adventure-game sequel is the follow-up to last year's *Personal Nightmare* (Box Office). *Nightmare* was a hit in Britain, where it was published on Tynesoft's Horror Soft label. An icon/menu-driven illustrated adventure



with animated sequences, this Mike Woodruffe creation got short shrift in the United States when publisher Key Punch/Box Office bit the dust. Fortunately for the sequel, the rights have been acquired by Accolade, a publisher with an excellent history of supporting scary software.

Personal Nightmare was hosted by buxom horror hostess Elvira, who gets star billing in the sequel, *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*. It seems Elvira's recent renovations of an ancient castle awakened the spirit of her long-deceased ancestor Queen Emelda. The evil Queen opens a rift to the netherworld to let her vile servants enter our dimension. Elvira warns the player that Emelda's minions are searching for the Scroll of Spiritual Mastery that will make her immortal and give her sway over all the souls in Hades—talk about shock troops! If



ELVIRA: A Vamp for All Seasons

She is the ultimate dream girl of every adolescent—and most post-adolescent, male horror fans—a flipped-out mix comprising two parts Mae West, two parts Morticia Addams and a dash of Christopher Lee. She is, of course, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, poster girl to a generation of monster mavens; star of stage, screen, TV, comic books and now, arcade and computer games as well.

Elvira is, in reality, Cassandra Peterson, a strawberry blonde actress/comedian whose resumé includes stints as a Las Vegas show girl, at the Lido in Paris and with the Groundlings comedy troupe in Los Angeles. Add to that the fact that she used to date Elvis Presley.

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Mean Streets

Mean Streets has set a new standard for interactive adventure games!

—R. A. Frisk
Sugarland, Texas

Beautiful! A new step ahead in computer entertainment.

—M. A. Platnick
Bluefield, WV

Mean Streets is a major technical breakthrough for the IBM.

—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.

—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

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CPAA

Animating digitized images and synchronizing them with great

voice and sound simulation for IBM P.C. make Mean Streets more realistic than anything you may already have experienced. To call Mean Streets just another computer game is an understatement!

—Game Player's Strategy



Mean Streets is truly an advanced interactive adventure experience.

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Elvira and the player find the scroll first, it contains the key to defeating Emelda.

Elvira, Mistress of the Dark allows players to explore the castle, solve puzzles and engage in hand-to-hand combat with various demons. It is scheduled for release on Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC computers during the first quarter of 1991.

Not all the past year's horror-oriented adventures were sequels, of course. Accolade published *Don't Go Alone* by Sterling Silver Software, a development group founded by design veterans Lee Actor and Dennis Koble. This is a classic haunted-house game in the tradition of such earlier titles as Icom's *The Uninvited* (Mindscape) and Lucasfilm's *Maniac Mansion* (Activision).

The player is the bellwether of a five-person team of paranormal investigators bent on discovering the secret of the "Fortress of Fright," as this particular haunted dwelling is called. The various team members are selected for their special abilities (technician, chemist, psychic, adventurer, etc.), and they must be chosen very carefully. The quintet finds itself up against a powerful entity known only as the Ancient One.

Don't Go Alone is a menu/icon-driven role-playing adventure with excellent graphics. The main display window uses a first-person perspective, while the remaining quartet of team members each appear in their own window in the four corners of the screen.

Speaking of haunted houses, Lucasfilm and Jaleco have teamed up to bring one of the best such computer games, *Maniac Mansion*, to the NES. The story is about what happens when a group of curious folks investigate the strange goings-on at Dr. Fred's bizarre old mansion (been weird out that ways ever since that darned meteor landed).

The video-game version is remarkably faithful to its computer game origins; in fact, it actually looks superior to the C-64 version! As in the original, characters are moved about a series of rooms or "sets" presented in slightly angled side perspective. A group of appropriate verbs appears at the bottom of the screen (push, open, get,



close, use, etc.); the user plays by clicking on a character, and picking the desired



Electronic Arts's *Escape From Hell*

action from the verb menu.

The chills are classically Lovecraftian in *The Hound of Shadows* (Electronic Arts for the Amiga). This illustrated, parser-driven text adventure is based on an original story set in H.P. Lovecraft's *Cthulu Mythos*. The *Mythos* centers around Lovecraft's idea that a race of elder gods,

with names like Yog-Sothoth and Cthulu, landed on Earth millennium ago from far distant worlds. Although their power is no longer what it once was, these Old Ones continue to live among us, hidden in shadows deep beneath the Earth, mostly in secret chambers far below a series of crumbling New England mansions.

In *Hound of Shadows*, the player either becomes one of the three prepared characters or answers a series of questions to generate a completely new one. Each hero or heroine has a unique background, native talents and skills necessary to solve the terrifying mystery of the *Hound of Shadows*.

The game takes place in 1920s London. A seance in Bloomsbury turns

from a palpable fake to frightening reality when a warning from beyond leads the player's surrogate on a journey into the occult in this horror-detective role-playing game.

An offbeat entrant into the scary sweepstakes is Richard Seaborne and Alan Murphy's *Escape From Hell*. In this unusual mixture of the creepy and comedic, an accidentally spoken incantation sends the two lead characters, based on creators Seaborne and Murphy, on a trip to the real underworld, complete with brimstone, sulfuric gases and lava. The subsequent journey brings the player into contact with a goofy mixture of historical and satirical characters including Al Capone, Genghis Khan, Hitler and, eventually, Old Scratch himself.

Despite its satirical con-

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The character of Elvira was born in 1981 when a Los Angeles TV station was looking for a female host to keep viewers awake through its package of mediocre horror films. The station first sought out Vampira, the actress who created the concept of a slinky female vampire in a couple of low-rent '50s fright flicks, most notably Ed Wood's utterly awful cult classic *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. But when Vampira didn't work out, the station decided to create its own sexy vamp, and Cassandra was one of many nubile prospects who took a "scream test" in order to win the part.

Cassandra based her now-famous costume on the sexy vampire cartoons she'd seen on comic characters like Warren Publishing's Vampiella, with a bit of the classic Vampira/Morticia Addams look added. The show's producer, Larry Thomas, selected the name "Elvira" and suggested a single, but crucial, improvement on Cassandra's costume: "Show more leg," was his sage advice.

The rest, as they say, is history. Several years ago, Peterson

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tent, *Escape From Hell* is presented in a fairly straightforward fantasy role-playing context. The main display shows an angled overhead view of the action, with close-ups of characters, text and other data appearing in separate on-screen windows. The game is published by Electronic Arts in IBM PC format.

Monsters in Action!

There are dozens and dozens of games featuring monsters that don't qualify as scary software. In most of those games, the monsters are simply visually interesting targets. In fact, there are darn few shooter-type games that don't feature monsters in some capacity.

Some arcade games, however, while not primarily intended to scare, make such copious use of wild-looking beasts that they obviously belong in this article. Milton Bradley's NES game *Abadox*, for example, sends the player inside the belly of a gigantic space creature to face the wildest assortment of creepy critters ever seen on the NES. Wildly colorful skeleton fish, mutant dogs, guardian ghouls and ugly eyeballs inhabit this multidirectionally scrolling shooter.

Psygnosis' *Blood Money* is an example of a computer game that makes similar use of monsters.

In this visually compelling, horizontally scrolling arcade shooter, the player is a space adventurer earning his money the hard way. Giant worms, floating, tentacle eyeballs, gigantic lobster claws and dozens of other extraterrestrial creepy crawlies stand between the player-character and the quartet of plane-



tary guardians he must ultimately confront in order to earn the plasma-soaked currency mentioned in the game's title.



Top right: Milton Bradley's *Abadox*
Above: Data East's *WereWolf*
Below: Innerprise's *The Plague*



The Plague features four levels, six weapons and a hot soundtrack including 30 different sound effects. The Amiga version will be released first, with other versions to follow.

Mutation is a popular subject these days, from comic-book characters like X-Men and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, to computer games like Data East's *WereWolf*. *WereWolf* is the story of ex-Navy pilot Damen Blake, who received a transfusion of mutated blood after an accident and now regularly transforms into a snarling, slavering wolfman, à la Sega's *Altered Beast*. Neither a villain nor a tortured hero, our protagonist is a superhero who can crawl, climb and flip through a series of

scrolling gauntlets. Along the way, the player acquires anger points to increase Blake's strength and surprise icons that trigger the wolfish metamorphosis.

Artronic Software's *Frightmare*, released in this country by Accolade's Avantage line, is an action game



with an intriguing background story and a great game hook. The object is to go

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and her husband/manager, Mark Pierson, obtained the rights to the Elvira character and Elvira has since become a virtual media juggernaut. In addition to her work on the syndicated *Movie Macabre* TV show, she has starred in her own comic book (*Elvira's House of Mystery* from DC Comics), movie (*Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*) and stage show (she is a Halloween staple at Knott's Berry Farm), in addition to countless guest appearances and advertising tie-ins. Come October, she seems to be everywhere, selling everything from soda pop (Mug Root Beer) to wrestling events (she was the main advertising focus for last year's NWA *Halloween Havoc* pay-per-view show and will also appear on this year's ads).

Last year saw Elvira make the big breakthrough, however, as the star of both a hit pinball machine and a successful British computer game. Her pinball, *Elvira and the Party Monsters* from Bally/Williams, has been the most successful new pin in several years, and her first Horrorsoft adventure, *Personal Nightmare*, was a smash in

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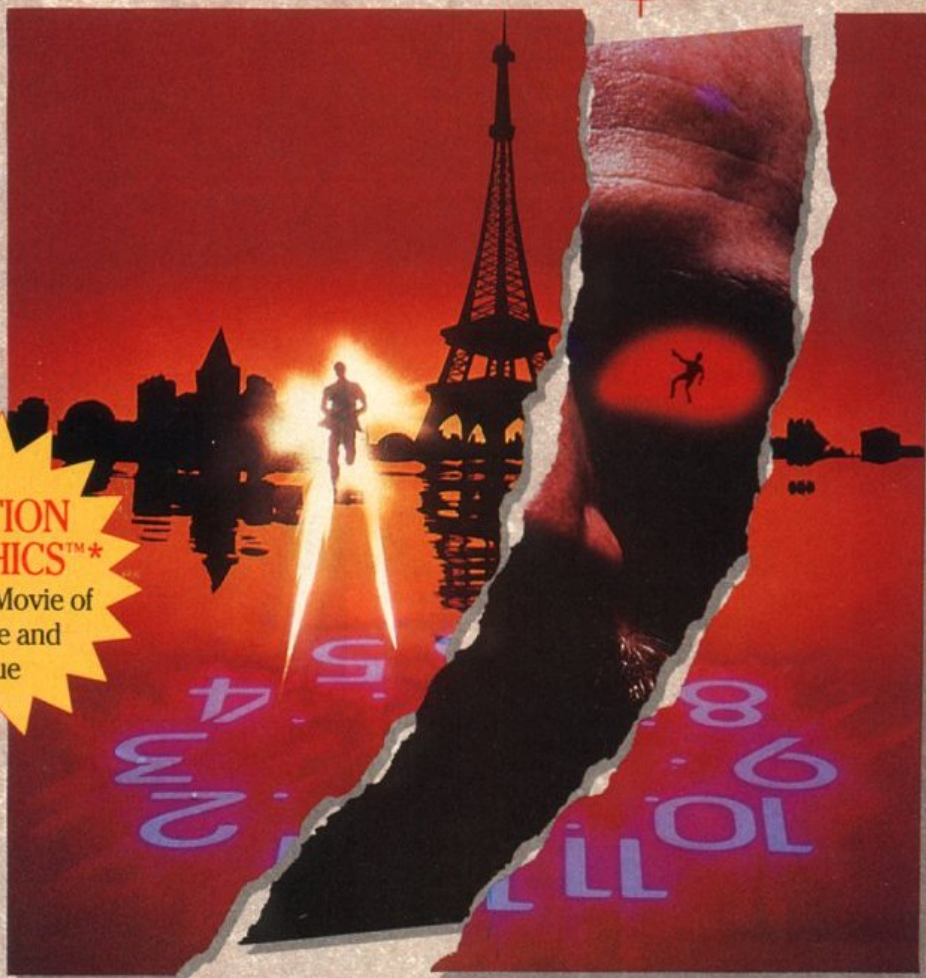
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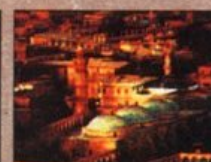
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to sleep at midnight and wake up at 8 a.m. Sounds easy, right? You have no idea. *Frightmare* is like a dream that never ends, with the sleeper struggling toward consciousness in order to escape the horrors. The metaphysics are all expressed in a horizontally scrolling action-adventure with 85 levels, seven different dream states, nine weapons and talismans, as well as several success scenarios. One of the game's neatest features is the digital clock ticking away in the lower right-hand corner of the screen throughout the game.

Weird Dreams is another kind of nightmare and one of the strangest pieces of computer software ever produced. Available in the U.S. from MicroProse, *Weird Dreams* casts the player as a hospital patient undergoing surgery and experiencing a series of violent, surrealistic nightmares. Giant wasps, carnivorous rose bushes, a killer lawn mower and a humongous cotton-candy machine with a person trapped inside are just part of the frenetic fun.

"We welcome attempts to interpret the game," reports MicroProse Marketing Vice-President, Gerry Blair. "We figure that *Weird Dreams* is sort of like a computerized ink-blot test. Anyone [who] claims to have figured it all out will probably need more psychiatric help than the people who designed the game."

The haunted-house setting turns up in a pair of action-oriented titles. *Dr. Chaos*, from FCI for the NES, challenges the player to locate his brother, who disappeared in the titular doctor's creepy domicile, victim of monsters created by Dr. Chaos. The game eventually goes beyond its spookhouse origins, however, with space warps to alternate dimensions and an entirely different kind of menace.

The suggestively titled *Splatterhouse*, from NEC for the TurboGrafx-

16, uses an old cinematic wheeze: The player-character and his girlfriend arrive at a haunted house, and the girlfriend is soon abducted by monsters. The player must explore the house, which comprises seven levels of action and a variety of weapons for use against the ghouls, ghosts and monsters he will encounter on the way.



Splatterhouse boasts hot sound and graphics and is already a hit in Japan on the PC-Engine (the TurboGrafx-16's Japanese cousin).



Above: NEC's *Splatterhouse*
Below: Color Dreams' *Hellraiser*

Players who want a break from high-intensity terror might cast a blood-shot eye on *Drac's Night Out*, a light-hearted look at the monsters of our fears and nightmares. This Parker Brothers game for the NES is actually a joint promotion with Reebok.

The protagonist, a "cool teenage Dracula," according to the press release, "wears Reebok's new 'The Pump' athletic shoes," which are

reflected in game terms by allowing the player to "pump up" the shoes, permitting greater speed and higher jumps, which give Drac access to previously unreachable objects. *Drac's Night Out* is scheduled for release this winter.

There have been other memorable moments in gruesome gaming over the past year. Special mention has to go to

the *Thriller* sequence in *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker*, from Sega for its Genesis system. In this scenario, Michael must rescue a group of kidnapped children who are imprisoned in a mist-shrouded graveyard by a clutch of zombies. The sound and graphics are extraordinary and do a marvelous job of evoking the creepy atmosphere required in truly terrifying software.

Monsters and horror are a hot issue



in the world of electronic entertainment, and if the trend continues, the next 12 months should bring even better chills and challenges for fans of spooked-out software! **Oooga-booga!**

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Britain, thanks largely to the personal promotion she did for it. In the process of promoting both the game and her feature film, Elvira became as big a phenomenon in Europe as she's been in the U.S. for the past decade.

In *Personal Nightmare*, Elvira plays the familiar role of horror hostess, introducing the player to the bizarre storyline and keeping him or her updated on the action throughout the game. The result was sufficiently impressive that U.S. publisher Accolade recently purchased the American rights to both *Personal Nightmare* and its follow-up, *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*. If it's successful in the States, you can expect more Elvira adventures will certainly follow.

What's next for Elvira? A variety of projects are in the talking stages, including a possible sitcom and an animated Saturday-morning cartoon show. A video game seems an eventual certainty and, beyond that—well, this is one Mistress of the Dark with an extremely bright future!

—B. K.



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And you'll experience all the sounds of a real tournament...from commentary...to caddy's remarks...to the swoosh of the swing...click of the drive...and bloop of the ball in the water.

LINKS also includes a practice area for driving, chipping and putting.

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LINKS is brought to you by Access Software...the same fanatics for accuracy and realism who gave you World Class Leader Board Golf—and the graphics are *unbelievably realistic*. Gone are square-edged screens that look like Lego blocks. With *LINKS*, hills actually look like hills, trees look like trees, water looks like water. (And, yes, golfers even look like golfers.) In fact, *LINKS* uses graphics technology so advanced that a VGA system is absolutely required for play.

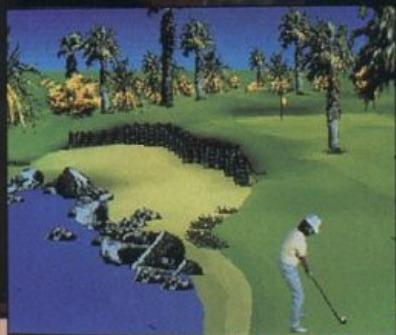
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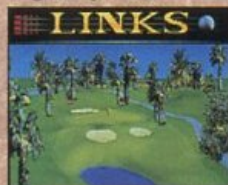
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IN CONTROL!



1990

by
Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

Between the game and the gamer stands the controller. The controller is the interface that allows the user to access the game elements. An inadequate controller can sabotage the best hardware and software in the world. Want proof? Ask an old-time gamer about the Atari 5200.

The 5200 was Atari's long-awaited, vaunted follow-up to the 2600 VCS. It offered superb sound and graphics, excellent game selection—including some of the finest titles from Atari's arcade catalog—and one of the most ineptly designed joystick controllers in gaming history. The only place you're likely to find a 5200 today is in an electronic-gaming museum, while the system it was designed to replace, the 2600, continues to sell (admittedly, at much reduced prices).

We always come back to the controller. Like mankind's search for a better mousetrap and the cure for the common cold, the pursuit of the perfect controller has obsessed game players since the dawning of the electronic-gaming era. In the early '80s we had Datasoft's "LeStick," a joystick without a base that used mercury switches to sense movement. Most of these awful contraptions currently occupy California landfills.

And what about the Atari Remote-Control joystick, the first attempt at a wireless controller? It would have been a major success except for the fact that it was so large, even Andre the Giant would have had a hard time working one of them.

The failure of these earlier novelty joysticks has not discouraged contemporary manufacturers from trying their hands at fashioning the perfect control device. Last year saw the debut of three new exotic controllers for the Nintendo Entertainment System alone: Brøderbund's U-FORCE, Nintendo's own Power Pad and Mattel's Power Glove. Miracle of miracles, the Power Glove was actually a hit, landing on the bestseller lists for much of 1990! Having scented blood, the quest for controller supremacy began in earnest.

The hottest-looking new control device of 1990 is Konami's Laser Scope Voice Command Stereo Headset, or, simply, the Laser Scope (as seen in the October VG&CE). The Laser Scope is actually a helmet, or headset, with a sighting device, microphone and stereo headphone built-in. The sighting device is attached to the top of the headset and extends out over the front of the user's eye. The microphone is hinged to the left earpiece, enabling it to pivot up or down.

The Laser Scope, which works on all current and upcoming NES Zapper

games (*Duck Hunt*, *Operation Wolf*, *Gotcha!*, *Bayou Billy*, etc.), was invented by Dan Moran, Jonathan Gerlitz and Roni Raviv. The trio was aiming for a more natural interface between games and gamers and believe they succeeded.

"You get totally involved in the synergy between man and machine," promises Roni Raviv. "Using Laser Scope, players will have better game control and will be able to reach limits never before exploited."

The Scope is a replacement controller in that it takes the place of the Zapper; though now your hands are free to also use it with a traditional NES Control Pad. It's somewhat similar in design to the LipStick that Access introduced with *Echelon*, its epic space-conquest game for the Commodore 64.

The LipStick was actually a fake headset in that it did not produce sound; its sole function was to support the mounted microphone used to initiate voice commands for firing. *Echelon* needed the LipStick because the sole action button on the Atari-style joystick was otherwise engaged.

The Laser Scope, on the other hand, handles all target-and-fire functions. The player lines up the target through the crosshairs of the eyepiece and issues fire

commands verbally into the microphone. If other function commands are required (such as movement), they're handled through the control pad, which can be gripped with both hands.

The eyepiece on the Scope is detachable, allowing it to be used like traditional audio headphones. The Laser Scope comes with a 15-foot cord and a suggested retail price of \$39.95.

Handicapped gamers, or anyone looking for a totally no-hands NES play experience, should check out Nintendo's Hands Free joystick controller. This ingenious device is strapped to the user's

chest and features a pivoting mount with an attached joystick shaft and a plastic blowtube. The player can cap the joystick shaft with either a padded cover or a chin-cup. At that point, the player uses his or her chin to

manipulate the joystick. The blowtube, meanwhile, is used to simulate the functions of the action buttons. "Sipping," or sharply inhaling on the tube, produces the same effect as hitting the "A" button on the Control Pad, while "puffing," or blowing, activates the "B" function. Other commands, such as **START**, **SELECT** and a pressure setting for the blowtube are mounted on the console, which is attached to the user through a pair of adjustable bands.

The Hands Free controller works with all NES games *except* for the Zapper or Power Pad software and can be ordered directly from Nintendo at (800) 255-3700.

OPEN SESAME!

The Laser Scope may be the coolest-looking of the NES specialty controllers, but the most eagerly anticipated is

certainly Galoob's Game Genie. At press time, the Genie was still the subject of intense litigation, and Nintendo had succeeded in obtaining an injunction against Galoob. Assuming, however, that the Genie eventually reaches store shelves, here's the lowdown on one of the most innovative and controversial gaming peripherals ever created.

The Genie isn't actually a controller in the traditional sense. The player doesn't hold it in his hands, and it doesn't plug in through the controller port on the NES. Instead, a game cartridge actually plugs into the Genie, then both game and Genie are inserted into the system's cartridge slot.

When the NES is turned on, however, instead of the standard title screen or game intro, a special Game Genie screen appears, consisting of a series of alphanumeric characters. At this point, the Genie is prepared to grant the gamer three wishes. If one were playing *Super Mario Brothers*, for example, he could set the height of Mario's jumps, give him any number of lives or the ability to enter the game at any level.

These "wishes" are passed to the Genie through a series of codes from a booklet that accompanies the peripheral. Galoob promises codes for most of the popular NES titles with updates issued periodically to cover new releases.

The Game Genie will sell at a suggested retail price of \$49.95 if and when it escapes the clutches of Nintendo's legal machinery.

TAKE A SEAT!

One of the most unique control devices to appear in recent months is undoubtedly the Simulator 1 "action chair" from Simulator

Technologies. An NES- or SMS-compatible controller, the Simulator 1 is basically an extremely durable (one hopes) joystick with a suspension-mounted chair atop the shaft and a pair of handles with action buttons on the side. The user sits in the chair, lifts his



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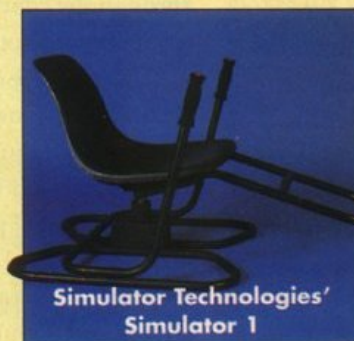
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feet onto the elevated footrests and grasps the twin handles like ski poles. On-screen movement is then controlled by leaning the chair in the desired direction.

As with many novelty controllers, the Simulator 1 is not ideally suited to all types of games. One wouldn't really want to play a lot of horizontally scrolling jumping-and-shooting games in it, for example. Where it excels, however, is in first-person, or pseudo first-person, driving and flying games. (Pseudo first-person perspective is exemplified by games like *Pole Position*, in which the user's vehicle actually appears on-screen.) Games like *Super Thunder Blade* (Sega for Genesis), *Super Monaco Grand Prix* (Sega for Genesis) and *Hard Drivin'* (Tengen for NES) attain a new level of realism.

The big questions with the Simulator 1 are size, durability and price. These are big, heavy devices, and most gamers probably don't have the space to keep a Simulator 1 in the middle of their game room. As for durability, none of the promotional material we received mentioned product warranties, so check this out before purchasing.

The current suggested retail price is \$149 for the economy model and \$179 for the deluxe model, but Simulator Technologies hopes to lower the price after the first of the year. Five-thousand chairs have already been ordered for Canadian distribution, and the company hopes to have 20,000 ready to ship by the holidays. They also hope to add versions for other video and computer game-system configurations.



Simulator Technologies'
Simulator 1

LESTER THE CORDLESS MOUSE

While wireless joysticks have become fairly ho-hum items in recent years, wireless mouse controllers still qualify as novelties. Meet Lester, a cordless mouse from Lightwave Technologies. Lester has been available for the Macintosh for over a year, but the IBM-compatible version is brand-new.

This mouse uses a new type of infrared technology dubbed Light Emitting Static Tracking Extended Range (hence the acronym, LESTER). Its internal CPU emulates both Microsoft and Mouse Systems standards and adjusts to either automatically. Lester operates within a 90-degree cone-shaped area up to five feet away from its receiver. The suggested retail price is \$129.

THINGS TO COME

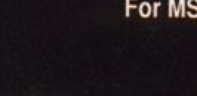
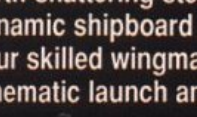
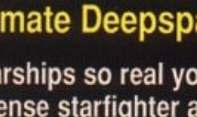
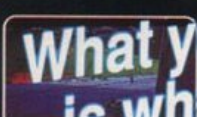
If any or all of the above-mentioned control devices catch on, we'll doubtless see many more in the months to come. However, failure hasn't daunted the development of new and, theoretically, improved controllers so far and is not likely to in the future. The next big breakthrough in controller technology could come from any number of directions. Maybe voice actuation will finally become a reality, or someone will devise a new wrinkle on the all-but-forgotten trackball.

Perhaps some bold visionary will devise a system whereby we can plug our very own cerebral cortex, à la Cyberspace, into the CPU of the computer or game player, allowing us to accomplish on-screen movement and other commands merely by *thinking* about it. Now *that's* a controller that just might catch on!



Lightwave Technologies'
LESTER the Cordless Mouse

continued on page 15



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THE BEST ALL-PURPOSE GAME CONTROLLERS

The more exotic controllers tend to come and go, but there are certain controllers that, year after year, have established themselves as superior. The criteria we used are as follows:

- Ergonomics—Is the stick comfortable and easy to use for a wide range of hand sizes? Does your hand begin to stiffen up after a heavy play session?
- Input—Are there enough input devices to allow satisfying game design and game play?
- Durability—Does the stick come off in your hand after a tough game?
- Cost—What's the cost-to-value ratio?
- Design—Is the controller attractive? Does it make you want to pick it up and play with it?

Ten points were awarded in each category, with a maximum score of 50 possible. Atari compatibility signifies that the controller works with Atari video and computer systems, Amiga and C-64. Below are the controllers that rated best.

KRAFT

(ATARI-/IBM-/APPLE-COMPATIBLE)

ERGONOMICS: 10

For fans of the traditional Atari-style joystick, Kraft makes the most natural, comfortable controllers.

INPUT: 7

It isn't Kraft's fault, obviously, but the Atari version has only one action button, and that hurts, even if Kraft's sticks do offer dual versions of that sole button for lefties/righties. The IBM stick has conveniently positioned dual action buttons, as well as X/Y "trim" controls.

DURABILITY: 10

Practically indestructible.

COST: 9

Very reasonably priced sticks up and down the line.

DESIGN: 7

Not the hottest-looking controller in town, but classic nonetheless.

TOTAL: 43 POINTS

GENESIS CONTROLLER

(FROM SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

ERGONOMICS: 9

The sculpted design is a real breakthrough in terms of control pads. Most comfortable controller of this type.

INPUT: 10

Three—count 'em, three—conveniently positioned action buttons. Makes for much improved gaming.

DURABILITY: 8

Hasn't been out long enough to really be tested, but early reports look good.

COST: 6

Too expensive. It is outrageous that only one is included with the system.

DESIGN: 10

One of the most elegant controllers we've ever seen.

TOTAL: 43

ADVANCED GRAVIS

(ATARI-COMPATIBLE)

ERGONOMICS: 7

The base is rather large for small hands.

INPUT: 8

Loses two points for being Atari-compatible and another for positioning two fire buttons on the same side of the base, but wins a point back by offering a third version of the single-action button at the top of the gun-grip-style joystick. Also has centering adjustment controls.

DURABILITY: 10

This is an extremely well-made joystick.

COST: 8

Slightly expensive but worth it.

DESIGN: 9

Extremely slick looking; cool, high tech design.

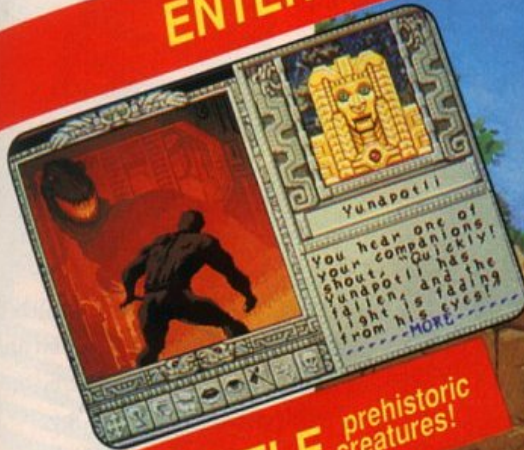
TOTAL: 42

[Note: Gravis also makes a MouseStick for the Macintosh and IIGS using the same high-quality technology and promises models for the IBM PS/2, ST and Amiga.]

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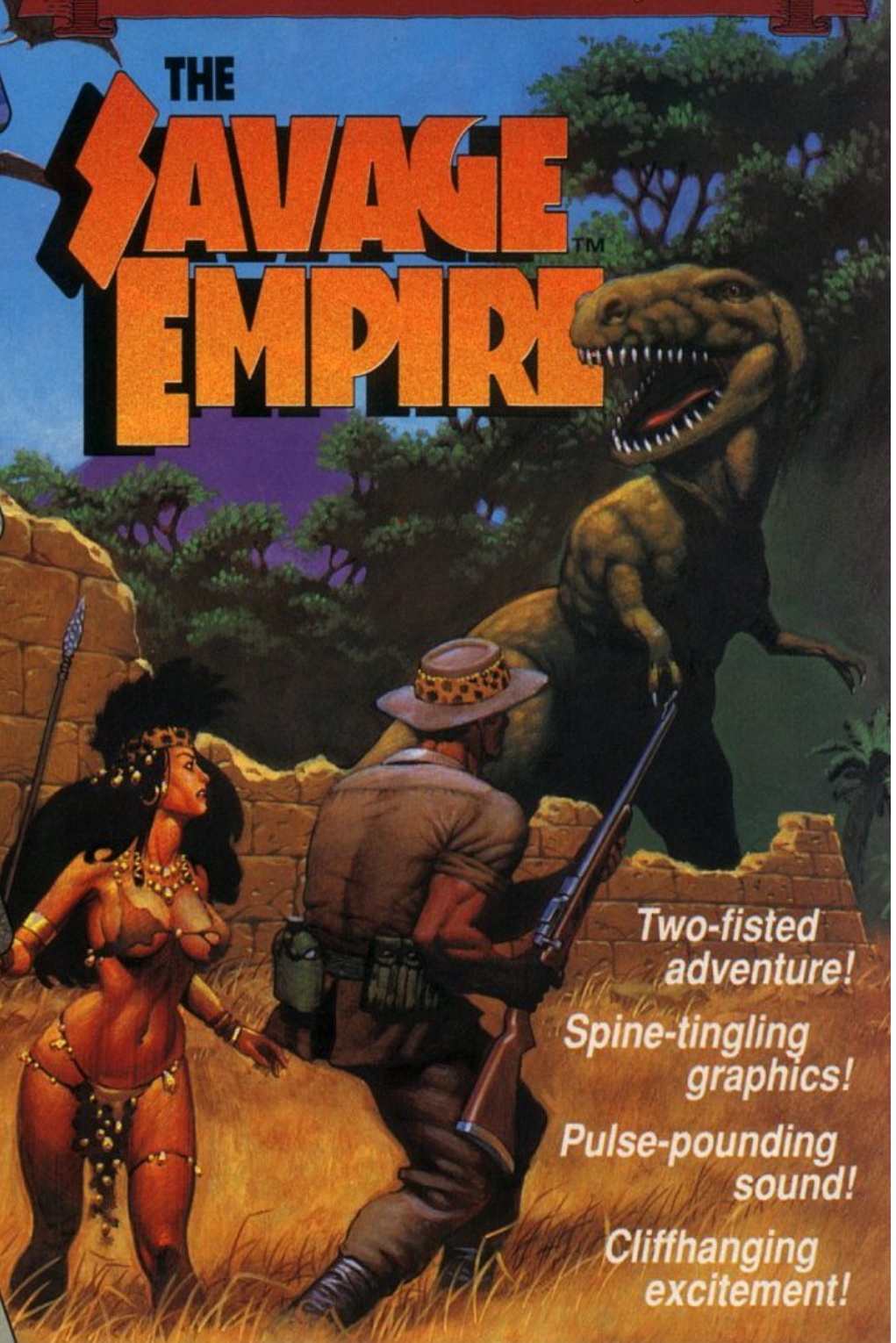
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Happ's Competition Pro Professional Control Pad

COMPETITION PRO PROFESSIONAL CONTROL PAD

(FROM HAPP CONTROLS, INC., FOR THE NES)

ERGONOMICS: 9

Designed by the creator of the Genesis control pad, the Competition Pro brings the same sculpted, comfortable design to the NES.

INPUT: 9

Special multi-function "turbo" controls allow the player to fine-tune the pad for auto-fire and other features.

DURABILITY: 6

We had some problems with the test unit and have not received a replacement at press time.

COST: 7

DESIGN: 10

The ultimate in control-pad design. Looks awesome.

TOTAL: 41

MINDSCAPE POWERPLAYER

(ATARI-COMPATIBLE)

ERGONOMICS: 10

If you like gun-grip-style controllers, this is the best.

INPUT: 8

The centrally located trigger button is perfect, but loses two points, as do all Atari-compatible sticks, for having only one button.

DURABILITY: 7

The most durable of any gun-grip-style controllers we have tested in a dozen years, but this style stick is still vulnerable to joystick snap-off.

COST: 9

Very good price.

DESIGN: 7

It really depends on how silly the idea of a gun-grip with a small red joystick on top of it strikes you, doesn't it?

TOTAL: 41

COMPETITION PRO JOYSTICK

(FROM HAPP FOR ATARI, NES, GENESIS, TURBOGRAFX-16 AND IBM PC)

ERGONOMICS: 8

Small-sized, comfortable joystick-type controller.

INPUT: 7

Uses large buttons at top right and top left of base.

DURABILITY: 8

COST: 9

DESIGN: 7

Simple, nothing special, but attractive.

TOTAL: 39

TURBOPAD

(FROM NEC FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16)

ERGONOMICS: 7

Uses the traditional NES control-pad



Happ's Competition Pro Joystick

design, and while it's okay for short play sessions, it's a hand-hurter after longer sessions.

INPUT: 9

If it had a third action button it would be perfect. The best features are the three-position fine-tuner switches for each of the two action buttons, allowing multishot and auto-fire options as well as handicapping.

DURABILITY: 7

Too early to call.

COST: 6

We're taking away points here because not only do users only get one controller with the TG-16, they have to purchase a special peripheral to enable more than solitaire play. For some inexplicable



Acemore's Supersonic

reason, the system only has one controller-input slot!

DESIGN: 6

Nothing fancy.

TOTAL: 35

SUPERSONIC—THE JOYSTICK

(FROM ACEMORE FOR THE NES)

ERGONOMICS: 7

The best of the oversized, wireless NES controllers. Unlike most of the controllers, which are similar to joysticks but mimic the control-pad layout—thereby creating left-handed joysticks—this one is triangular, with action buttons well-positioned at both sides of the base.

INPUT: 8

Lots of fine-tuning and special features.

DURABILITY: 6

The models we have tested do not have a good track record.

COST: 6

Expensive, but the infrared technology really works.

DESIGN: 8

Hot-looking, though perhaps not for conservative adults.

TOTAL: 35



—B. K. & J. W.



Nintendo's Power Pad

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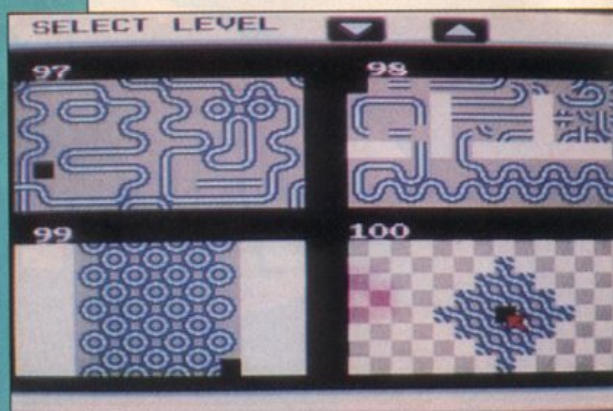
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Blue Lightning

Atari for the Lynx



In Level 6 you must fly to the various airstrips and land. By doing a barrel roll (Option 2 and L or R) and holding the plane steady upside down while pressing U (landing) over an airstrip, you are able to land upside down. The cockpit opens from the fuel tank, and you take off backward. Although this egg, sent in by Eric Foirster of Powell, Tennessee, won't do anything for your game, it's still fun to watch. Thanks, Eric.

Thunderbirds

Activision for the NES

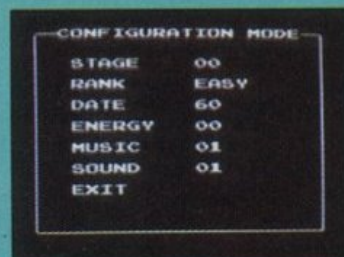


R. Stewart of Cleveland, Ohio, sent in two eggs for *Thunderbirds*.

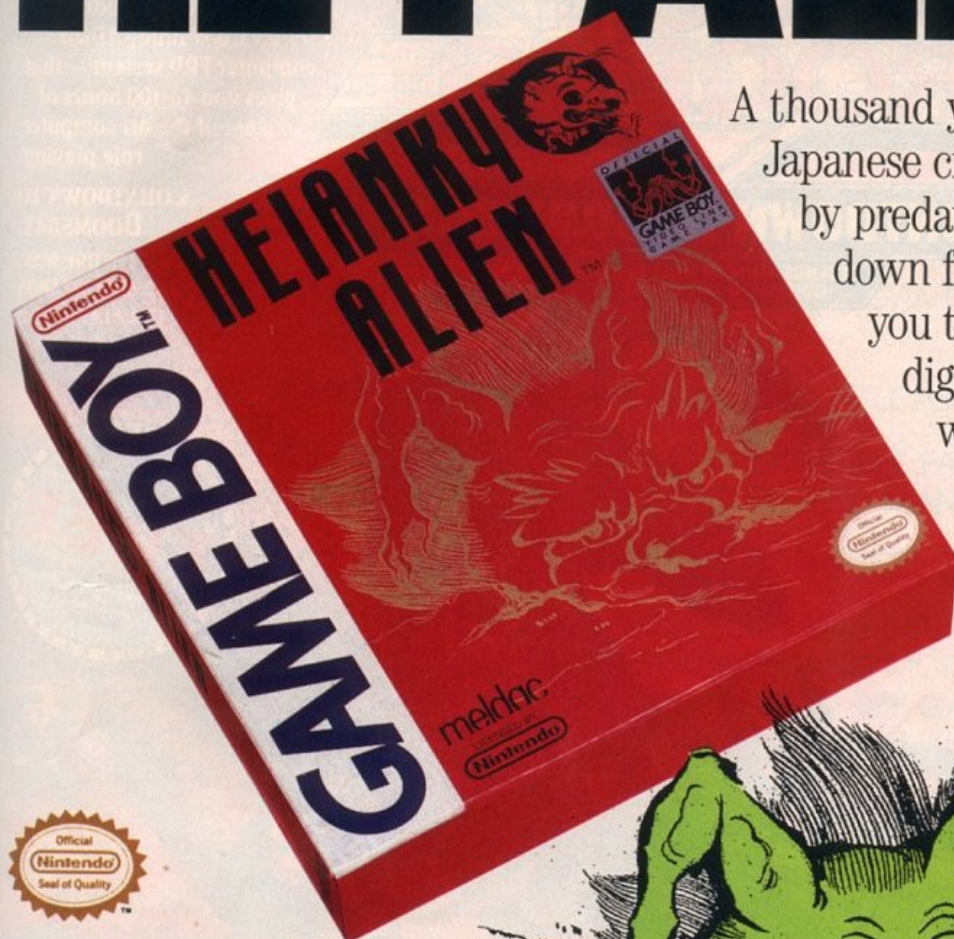
The first one is a level select: With the game powered up, press and hold U and L on Controller 1. Reset the game, which should bring up a black screen. (If the company credits appear, try it again.) Once the black screen is up, press and hold A, then hold down B and finally, press **SELECT**. A configuration mode will appear.



The second egg is a level advance. During play press **START** to pause. Then press U, L, A, B and **SELECT** buttons at the same time. When you take the game off pause, your ship should automatically exit through the top of the screen.



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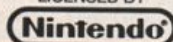
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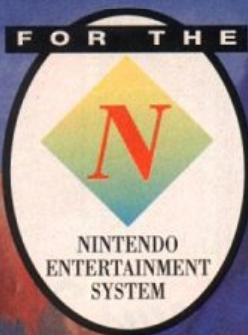
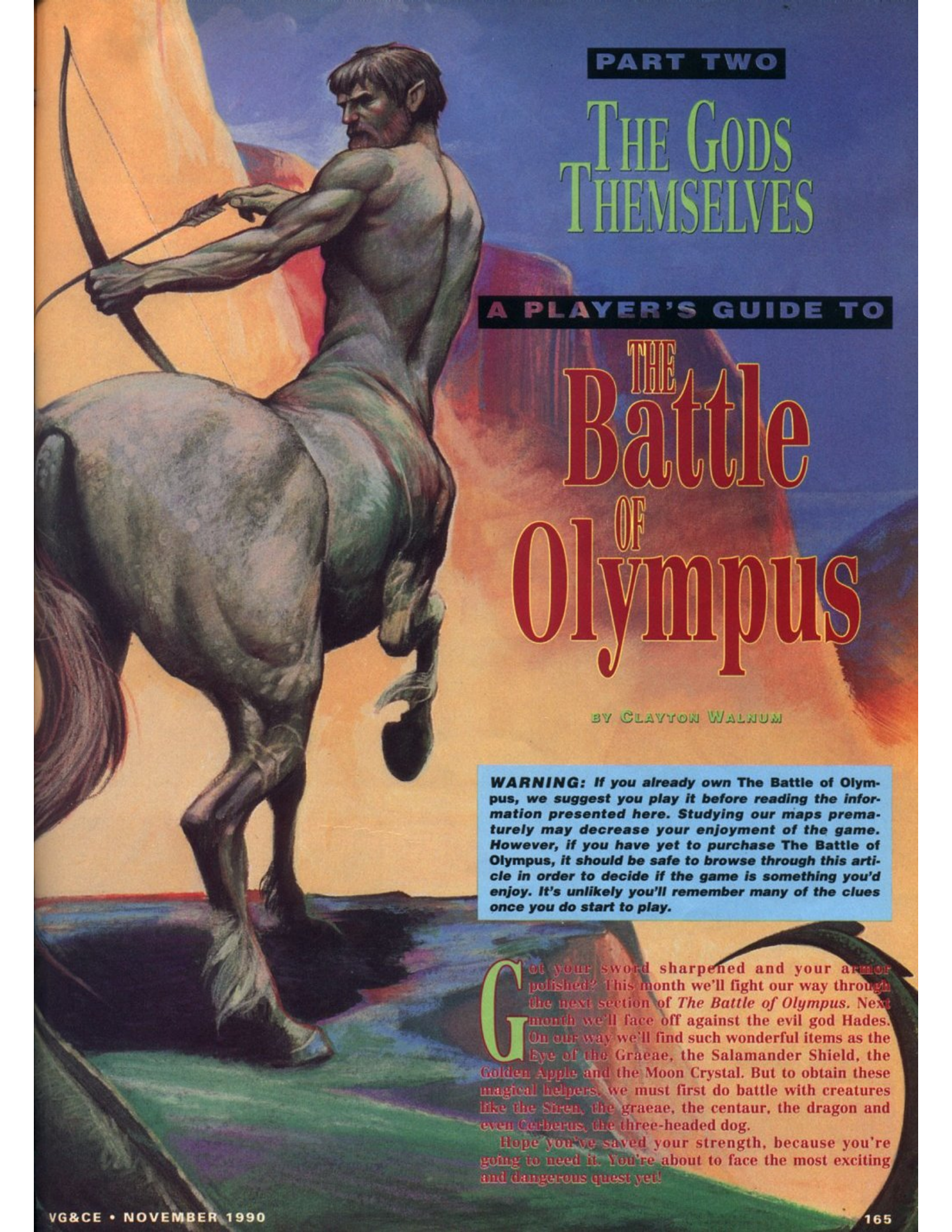


ILLUSTRATION BY JIM AUCKLAND

Auckland



PART TWO

THE GODS THEMSELVES

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

THE Battle OF Olympus

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

WARNING: If you already own *The Battle of Olympus*, we suggest you play it before reading the information presented here. Studying our maps prematurely may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you have yet to purchase *The Battle of Olympus*, it should be safe to browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.

Got your sword sharpened and your armor polished? This month we'll fight our way through the next section of *The Battle of Olympus*. Next month we'll face off against the evil god Hades. On our way we'll find such wonderful items as the Eye of the Graeae, the Salamander Shield, the Golden Apple and the Moon Crystal. But to obtain these magical helpers, we must first do battle with creatures like the Siren, the graeae, the centaur, the dragon and even Cerberus, the three-headed dog.

Hope you've saved your strength, because you're going to need it. You're about to face the most exciting and dangerous quest yet!

This stairway also leads to Strip

STRIP 1: LACONIA

This door leads back to Peloponnisos.

If you bang on the stones here, you'll find a secret trap door.

It's probably easier to walk on the ceiling and jump over the eagles than it is to fight all the creatures on the ground.

Take this stairway down to Strip 2.

STRIP 2: LACONIA

This is a good place to build up your life and olives, by continually fighting the monsters.

This door also leads back to Strip 2.

Beat this rock thrower, and you'll be awarded Ambrosia, which will not only cure you, but will also lengthen your lifeline.

STRIP 3: LACONIA

This door leads back to Strip 2. To light the chambers, you must shoot a fireball with the Staff of Fennel.

Beyond the door here, you'll find the temple.

The fountain here will cure weary travelers, as well as fill Trojan pitchers.

Talk to the man four beyond this door.

STRIP 4: LACONIA

Hop on a dolphin here, and ride back to the Laconian mainland.

Play your harp to stun the Siren; then kill her with your sword. When she's gone, a secret door will appear that will take you beneath the sea, where you'll face the graeae.

STRIP 6: PHTHIA

You'll find your first nymph here. Talk to her and she'll give you a fragment of love, along with a message.

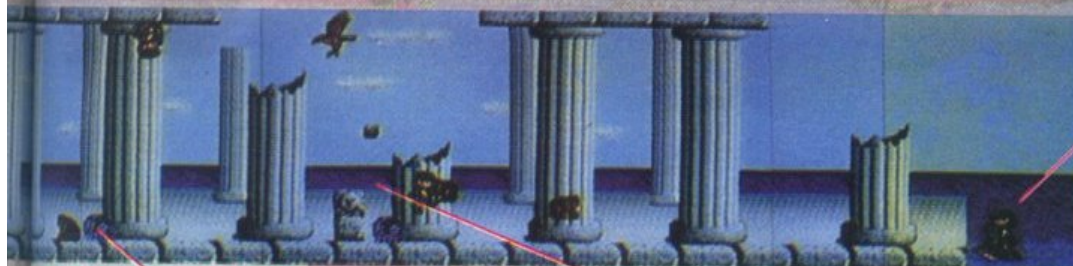
Get rid of the crawlle creature here, then stand on the ledge and kill the eagles. When the eagles drop items, don't pick them up. Soon the eagles will stop coming at you, and you can jump across the platforms without difficulty.

This door leads back to Attica.

Here, call Pegasus with your harp, and you'll be taken back to Laconia.

STRIP 5: ARGOLIS

This door leads to the main caverns of Argolis.



Find the secret trap door in the stones here, and you'll gain access to the temple.

If you play the harp here, Pegasus will take you back to Arcadia.

Hop on a dolphin here and ride to a secret island.



Take this door back to the Siren's island.

This way to the temple, where you can buy the ocarina for 60 olives.

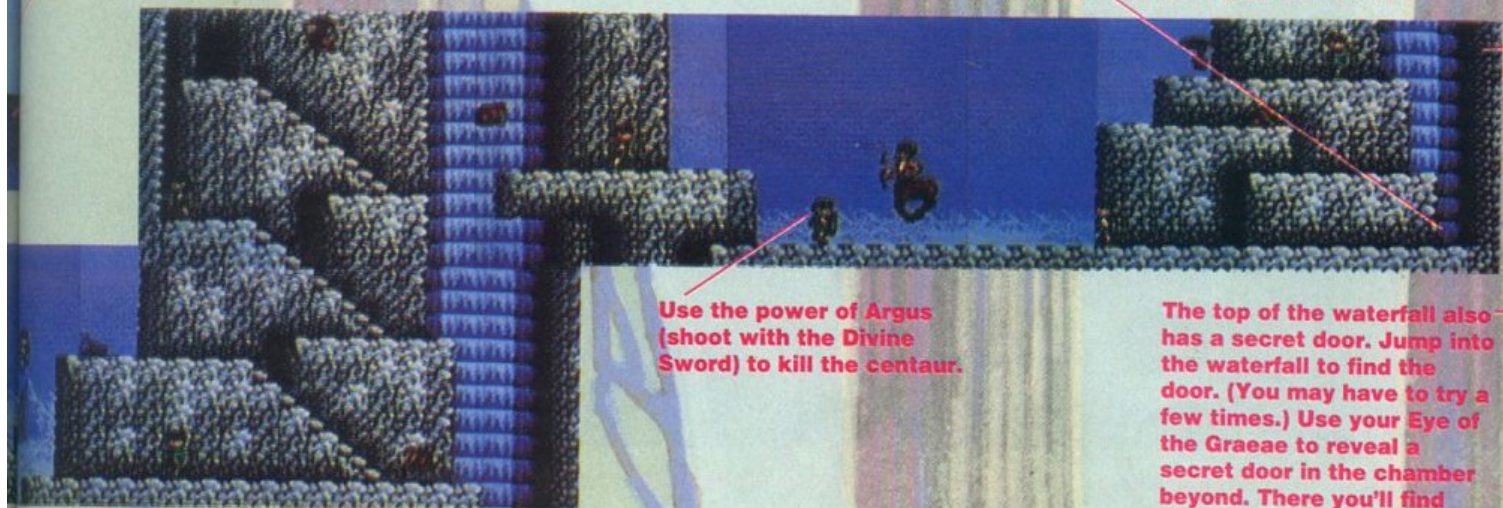
This door leads to the far left of Strip 3, an underground chamber.



The graeae are easy to beat. When you defeat them, you'll get the Eye of the Graeae. Take the eye back to the cavern in Argolis and find a hidden door.

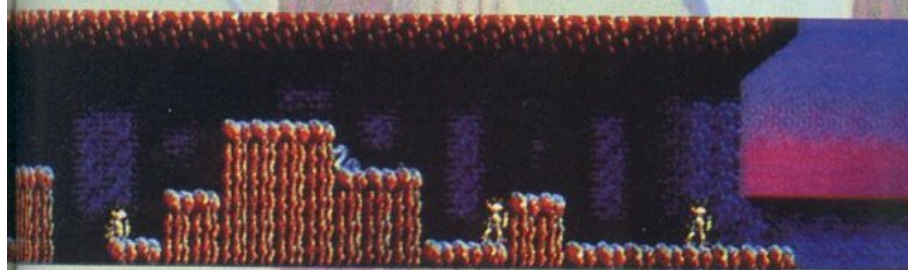
A dolphin here will take you to the shores of Crete.

The bottom of the waterfall hides a secret door. Stand over the waterfall, and press up on your controller.



Use the power of Argus (shoot with the Divine Sword) to kill the centaur.

The top of the waterfall also has a secret door. Jump into the waterfall to find the door. (You may have to try a few times.) Use your Eye of the Graeae to reveal a secret door in the chamber beyond. There you'll find another fragment of love.



STRIP 7: PHTHIA



Here's the temple of Hephaestus, where you can obtain the power of Argus—for 70 olives.

The magic fountain here will restore your life and refill your Trojan pitcher.

The best strategy for dealing with the butterflies is to stay out of their way. Move forward quickly.

STRIP 8: PHTHIA



The doors here lead through a cave and back to Strip 6.

The Salamander Shield will help protect you from these fire-throwing flowers. Use the power of Argus to destroy them.

If you take a dolphin ride you'll end up on the Siren's Laconia.

Door 1 leads back to Strip 9.

Door 3 leads to a small room.

STRIP 10: CRETE



Exit left and you'll be at Door 12 on Strip 11.

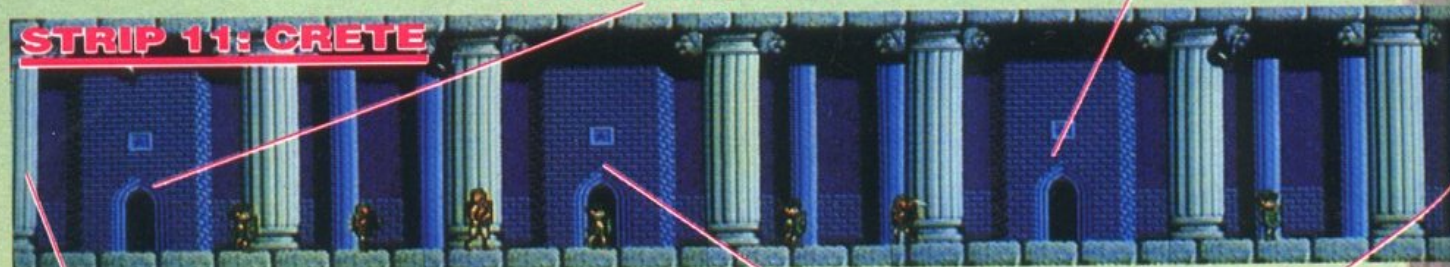
Door 2 leads to Strip 12, Door 13.

Door 4 leads to Strip 14, Door 15.

Door 7 leads to Strip 12, Door 16.

Door 9 leads to Strip 14, Door 19.

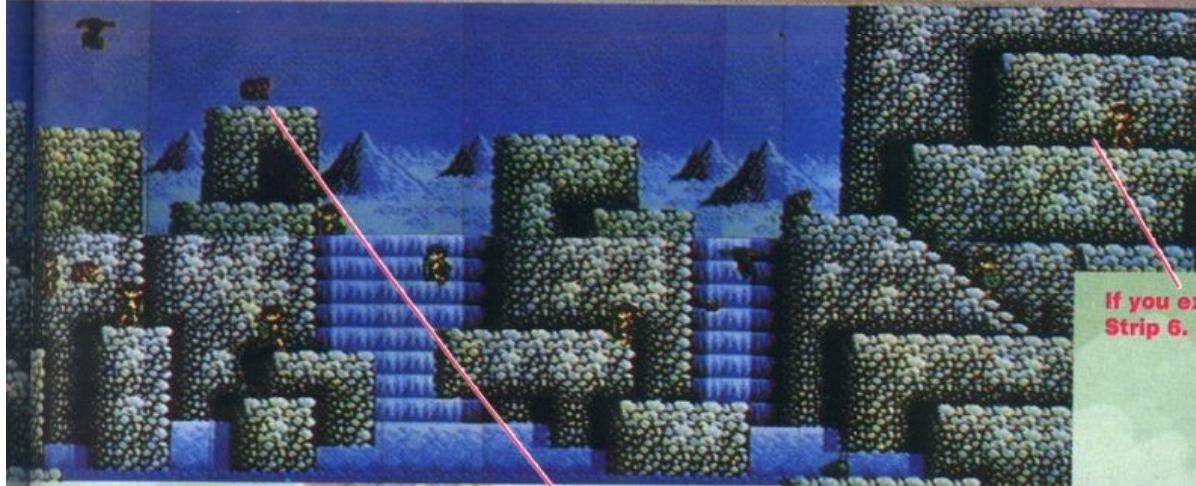
STRIP 11: CRETE



Exit left and you'll be at Strip 10, Door 6.

Door 8 leads to a small room.

Door 10 leads to Strip 14, Door 17.



If you exit here, you'll be at Strip 6.

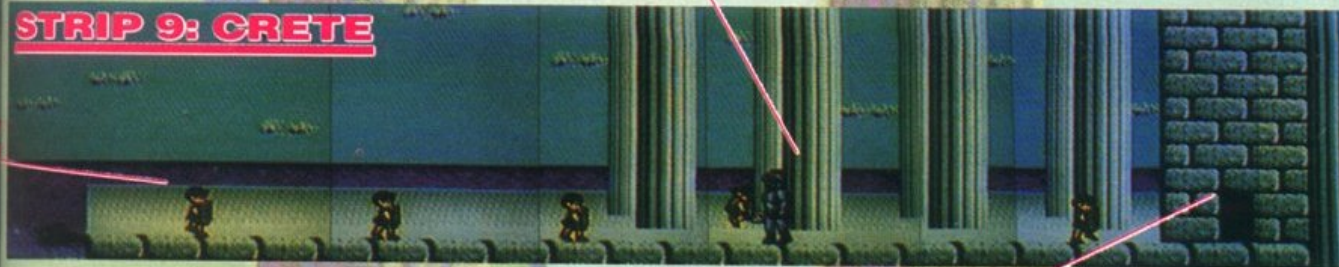
Beyond this door, you'll find more ambrosia. In order to get to the door, you must travel past it to the left, climb the tower and then move back to the right.



At the dragon, move all the way against the tree, then turn and left. Use the Divine Sword to finish it. When he's dead, you'll get the Apple, which will make your life last twice as long.

When fighting the knight, stoop low and swing at his legs.

STRIP 9: CRETE



This door leads to Strip 10, the beginning of the castle maze.

Door 5 leads to Strip 12, Door 14.



Exit right and you'll be at Strip 11, Door 7.

Door 6 leads to Strip 14, Door 27.

Door 11 leads to Strip 14, Door 22.



Exit right and you'll be at Strip 10, Door 1.

Door 12 leads to Strip 12, Door 18.

STRIP 12: CRETE

Door 14 leads to Strip 10, Door 5.

Exit left and you'll be at Door 18.

Door 13 leads to Strip 10, Door 2.

Door 15 leads to Strip 17, Door 37.

Door 20 leads to Strip 15, Door 31.

STRIP 13: CRETE

Exit here and you'll be at Strip 14, Door 30.

Door 19 leads to Strip 11, Door 9.

Door 21 leads to Strip 11, Door 10.

Door 26 leads to Strip 10, Door 4.

STRIP 14: CRETE

Exit here and you'll be at Strip 13, Door 24.

Door 25 leads to Strip 18, Door 39.

Door 27 leads to Strip 10, Door 6.

Door 32 leads to a small room.

STRIP 15: CRETE

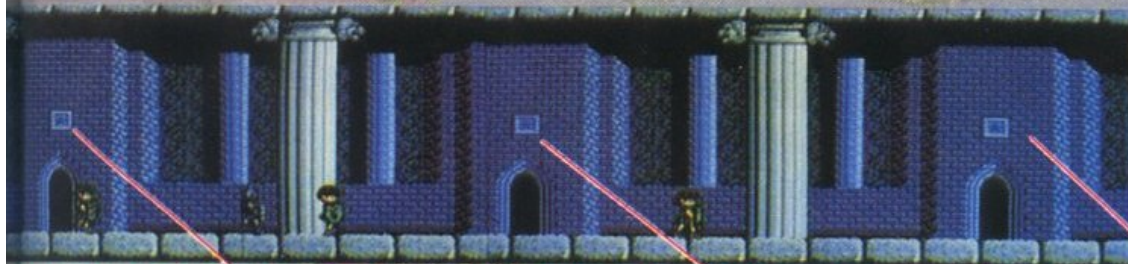
Door 31 leads to Strip 13, Door 20.

Door 33 leads to Strip 13, Door 23.

STRIP 17: CRETE

Door 37 leads to Strip 12, Door 15.

Door 38 leads to the temple of Ares, where you can get the Bracelet of Power. The Bracelet of Power doubles your attack power and will let you use the power of Argus without losing life points.



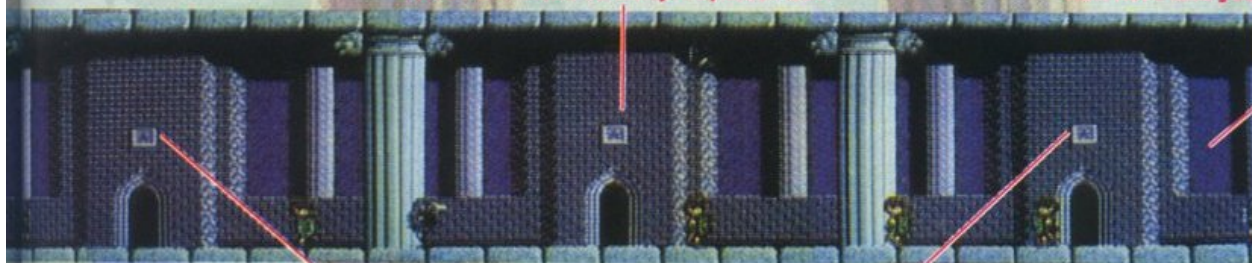
Door 16 leads to Strip 11, Door 7.

Door 17 leads to a magic fountain where you can get healed.

Door 18 leads to Strip 11, Door 12.

Door 23 leads to Strip 15, Door 33.

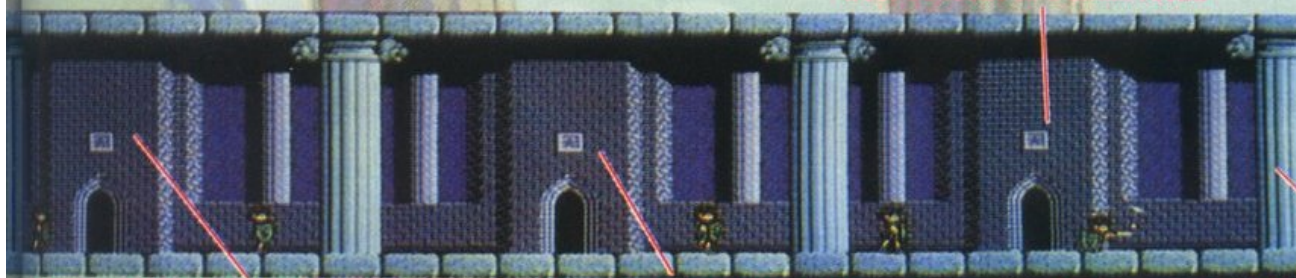
Exit here and you'll be at Strip 14, Door 25.



Door 22 leads to Strip 11, Door 11.

Door 24 leads to a magic fountain.

Door 30 leads to a small room.



Door 28 leads to Strip 16, Door 35.

Door 29 leads to Strip 16, Door 36.

Exit here and you'll be at Strip 13, Door 19.

Door 35 leads to Strip 14, Door 28.

STRIP 16: CRETE



STRIP 18: CRETE



Door 39 leads to Strip 14, Door 25.

When you get the second fragment of love, found in the secret cave in Phthia, this energy beam will turn off.

If you have trouble beating this Minotaur, you're probably not yet strong enough. Did you get the golden apple yet?

This door, beyond which you'll find the third fragment of love, will open when the Minotaur is defeated.

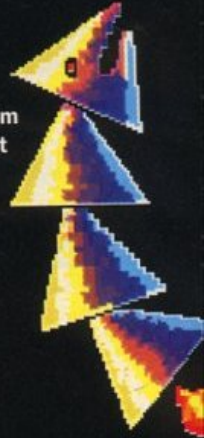
HOW TO PLAY SOLAR JETMAN AND LIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT.



The Jetpod.
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Don't make him
mad. He doesn't
take well to
strangers.



If he nails you with a plasma bolt, you're vapor.

Beware.
Its bite is worse
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Usually travels
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The main man himself.
Solar Jetman.

This one's on your
side. See for yourself.

A thick-skinned fighting machine.

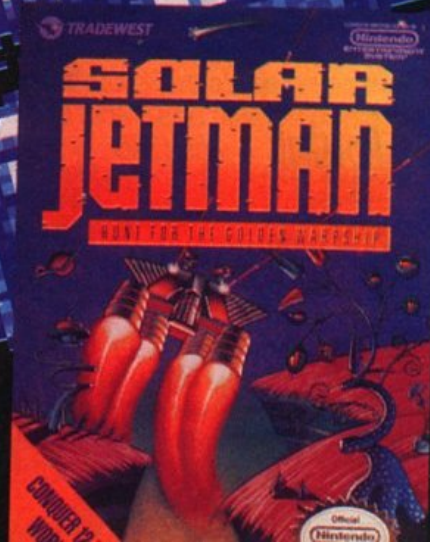
Welcome to the Mothership.
Solar Jetman calls it home.
It's also your ticket to 12
alien worlds hiding the Golden
Warship pieces. Bon voyage.

Alien with an attitude.

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It's often been commented that women make up only a very small percentage of video-game players and leisure computer users (using a computer outside of work). I've heard publishers and distributors of gaming software bemoan the fact that there is this vast, essentially untapped market of females out there that they have been hitherto unable to reach.

I've heard the explanations: women find the violence in most video games a turnoff, the games are too "cold" and mechanical and the ever-popular insinuation that women aren't as good at spacial relationships and hand-eye coordination as men. Now if you believe these explanations, you'd expect that the only kind of software most women would find interesting would be something like a "Nintendo's Super Nadine Knitting" or "Jenny Jaguar's Genesis Jump Rope."

I don't buy into these stereotypes. I think the market fails to attract a female audience for a number of reasons, one of the strongest being the way the computer- and video-gaming industries portray women. Take a look at the ads and packaging for many games, and you'll often find scantily clad or "bombshell" women either being saved or draped over a hero like a cheap centerfold. Then look at the games themselves. In how many of these titles, particularly in the adventure video games, is the goal to rescue the princess/girlfriend/damsel in distress? Once or twice this is a valid plot point, but after game upon game features this premise, it goes beyond that and points to a larger problem. What? Simple. Your goal in these games is to "get the girl," which carries with it the incredibly backward image that women are objects, to be taken and/or won. Fight the dangers and you're rewarded with a girl.

No wonder women remain such an untapped market.

It's been said before in these pages, but it bears repeating: The video- and computer-game publishers should be trying a little harder to publish something *original*, not just the same old clichés in boxes featuring scantily clad princesses or tough bimbos in tube tops draped across Corvettes.

That said, let's look at some games where you *don't* get the girl when you win.

NFL Football

by Konami for the Game Boy

Soccer Mania

by CSG Imagesoft Inc. for the Game Boy

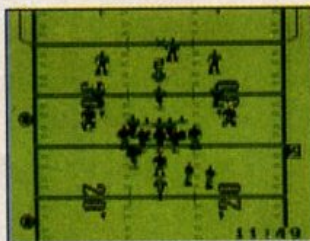
I don't know. I really just don't know. Sports are a big deal and big business these days, but there's something about the thrill of a sporting event that just doesn't come off on a screen barely more than half the size of a



THE GAME'S THE THING

by

MAURICE MOLYNEAUX



Gridiron action goes portable with Konami's *NFL Football* for the Game Boy, which is authorized by the NFL.

tense contests where only one side emerges victorious. There's something larger than life about them, as if even larger conflicts and hostilities are being played out in miniature before the fans.

If I had to criticize video sports simulations in general, it's precisely because they can rarely re-create the feeling of the actual sport, the drama of the event. They get the rules correct, but the *sport* is missing.

playing card. Sports like American football, baseball and soccer (real "football" to the rest of the world) are large-scale events, pitting large teams against one another in

That said, both of these seem to be decent games, although both of them seemed kind of flat, despite the fact that they take different approaches to the games they present. *NFL Football* depends very much on picking plays and then executing them, while *Soccer Mania* is more of a "try to control the ball" type of game. All in all, I was unimpressed with both titles, because when push came to shove, I just couldn't get into them. Maybe it was the absence of the roar of the crowd, or maybe it was just that it never felt like I was playing the sport. Both games seemed sluggish and lacked that sense of speed and tension that should exist during play.

As for graphics, with *NFL Football* I felt like I was looking at an animated Xs and Os drawn on a coach's chalkboard. The "players" are hardly recognizable as humans, and the field is little more than a series of horizontal lines. With *Soccer Mania* the graphics are much better, with detailed little men running around the field. However, these players are the cute, big-round-head and short-legged variety, and I constantly found myself screaming at them to run faster.

Soccer Mania's greatest saving grace is that you can use the VideoLink to play against another person, heating up an otherwise tepid contest. *NFL Football* appears to be a single player contest.

If you like other sport-based video games then I suppose these two might be for you. I not, pass.

Xenophobe

Atari Corp. for the Lynx

This is one of the first arcade translations to come over to the Lynx from the coin-op world, and it's a top-rate job. Admittedly, the graphics aren't as good as the arcade version's, but they beat most of the other home versions hands down. Oh, and under the new graphics there's a solid game too. Who could ask for anything more?

In *Xenophobe* your job is to clear various space stations and outposts of the Xenos that have infested them. (*Xeno*, for your information, means "alien" and *phobe* means "fear," so the title of this game is really "Alien Fear." So much for today's language lesson.) You can pick from a starting roster of nine characters ranging from Dr. Pink to Col. Truth. Your star cruiser delivers you to each station, where you are beamed in. Your mission is simple: Clear out the alien infestation using nothing but your wits...and your guns, your bombs and the occasional self-destruct mechanism!

The Xenos resemble the title creature from *Alien* in that they start as eggs, turn into larva forms that grip your body and eventually grow into large, venom-spitting creatures with cruel, nasty, vicious teeth. Showing no mercy

Think Fast!



Introducing QUARTH.™ The action packed, mind bending puzzle challenge of your life.

Look out! Ultra's QUARTH is the most tortuous tag team test of

brain power and fire power ever to storm your Game Boy.™

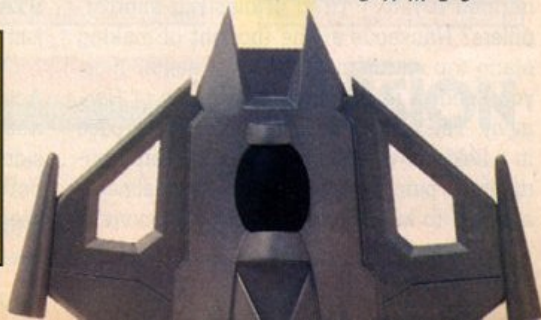
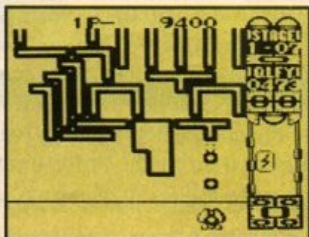
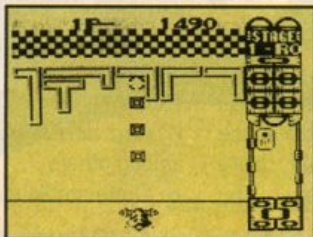
Can you stop the puzzling rain of bionic block patterns from crushing you to a pulp? To find out, pick the playing field. Choose a blockbuster ship. Then cruise the Quarthdome using your rapid fire fingers to blast away at block patterns and pile on the points. Collect power boosters along the way and you may even charge into bonus stages where it's you against the clock and the unstoppable blocks of QUARTH. But use your head or you'll lose it, because without a strategy there's sure to be a tragedy.

Double the action with Video Link™ and take on a friend. But whatever you do, take on QUARTH. Just remember, think fast or you'll be puzzled into extinction.

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Atari's latest release for the Lynx is *Xenophobe*, a translation of the Bally/Midway coin-op game that requires you to battle it out with an infestation of alien insectlike creatures.

is the only way to survive, and time is of the essence. The only good Xeno is a dead Xeno seems to be the motto of this game.

If (more like *when*) your on-screen alter ego bites the cosmic dust, you are returned to the list of unused characters to pick another adventurer. When all are gone, the game is over and the Xenos relax and pick their teeth with the bones of the unfortunates you led to their doom.

The game, which can be played by a single player or up to four (using the ComLynx), ends when all of the available characters have been exhausted. At this point you are informed how well you did, and it's very likely that at the finish one of the Xenos will pop in to have the last laugh.

The only problem I've had with *Xenophobe* so far is that it doesn't seem hard enough. On one of my first attempts at the game I completed five of the nine stations. The instructions state that the stations repeat until the game ends, but I feel I'd rather have had the game a tad harder to complete with a definite ending instead of this "loop until you die" stuff. Still, it's a decent game, and if you're into killing alien snotterpillers, you'll probably enjoy it.

Oh, and look, no damsels in distress! Unfortunately, only one of the nine possible player-characters is clearly female, so she seems like a token. Still, at least she gets into the action instead of being the hero's reward.

Harmony Accolade for the Game Boy

Want to unwind with your Game Boy instead of tensing up? Sick of rescuing kidnapped royalty? Tired of blasting snotterpillers? Nauseous at the thought of making Mario trip on his moustache yet again? If so, you need to relax with a nice game of *Harmony*. This game's a welcome change of pace in a field rife with action contests geared primarily at pumping you up with adrenaline as opposed to letting you have fun. *Harmony* is

an interesting contradiction—simple yet complex, easy yet difficult. The rules and play are simple, but the challenge is great and the addiction factor is immense.

In *Harmony* you pilot a "Seeker" and push matching "energy spheres" together, thus creating harmony that would otherwise be shattered if the spheres were left dis-united and exploded. This sounds easy enough, except that if your pushing causes dissimilar spheres to touch, they can produce a new

sphere, complicating matters. One wrong nudge can set off a series of ricocheting spheres creating literally dozens of new energy spheres to eliminate.

Harmony incorporates some simple physics. Your Seeker and the spheres all have momentum, so you have to be extremely careful how much thrust you apply when pushing a sphere, else you might hit it with too much force and send it careening across the screen. Some spheres and sphere groups are linked with ropelike bonds that complicate matters, because when you push one sphere, it can sort of "tug" on those bonded to it.

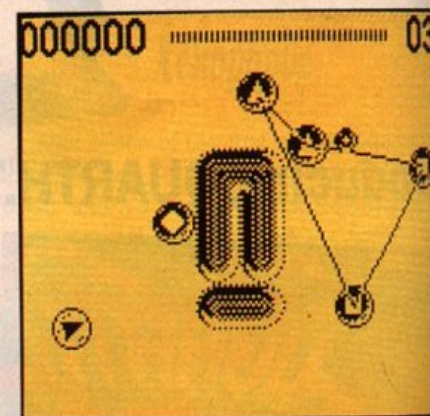
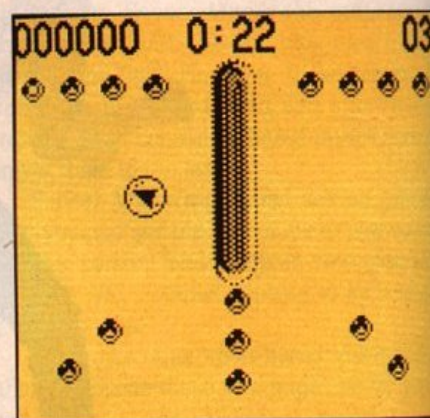
Your Seeker has a specific energy level, which runs out as time passes. Uniting like spheres bestows extra energy and, therefore, more time. If your energy runs out, it's *Blammo* time. Likewise, if the spheres explode before you can unite them, you lose a life.

The instructions for the game suggest that you not tense up, that you relax and think each puzzle through. This is good advice but hard to follow because *Harmony* does grate on the nerves now and then, particularly when a chain reaction of colliding spheres creates new spheres galore and the action on the screen slows to a crawl. Much to my surprise, in some cases my control of the Seeker got sluggish with surprisingly few spheres on the screen. I suspect this may have something to do with the limitations of the Game Boy hardware, but I'd also chance a guess that it has to do with the "bonds," which seem to add to the slowness. Perhaps calculating how those bonds affect linked spheres is part of the problem. Whatever the cause, it's so annoying that when things get really slow, you're tempted to reset the game (possible by pressing the A, B, **START** and **SELECT** buttons simultaneously) just to get away from the mess.

The sluggishness is not *Harmony*'s single Achilles' Heel. The other is the screen display itself. The playfield "wraps" around on all sides. Fly out the top and you reenter at the bottom and so forth. Unfortunately, there seems to be a little "hyperspace" around the

borders, where you can easily lose track of your Seeker. Furthermore, the score and energy displays often obscure what is passing under them. On more than one occasion I've had a hard time telling what kind of sphere was under my score and momentarily lost track of the Seeker under the energy meter.

Another thing that really bugged me is that sometimes a round starts with your Seeker under the level number, which does *not* immediately vanish. Because the ship is partially obscured, it's hard to tell which way it's pointing, and you're forced to either wait for the level number label to vanish (wasting time and energy) or take a risk of thrusting in the wrong direction. These graphics clunks could have been eliminated by ending the playfield under the score and making the level label vanish *before* a player could start maneuvering.



Harmony, from computer-game manufacturer Accolade, is a strategy game for the Game Boy that features non-violent game play.

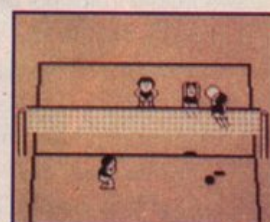
Harmony features 50 levels of puzzles to solve, some elegantly simple, others devilishly complex. The occasional sluggishness and graphics clutter aside, it's an excellent game. The only thing it lacks is some nice music to add to make it more "harmonious."

That's it for now. Next time we'll take a look at some Game Boy adventure titles, including *Duck Tales*, *Gargoyle's Quest* and *Wizard and Warriors*, the *Fortress of Fear* among others.

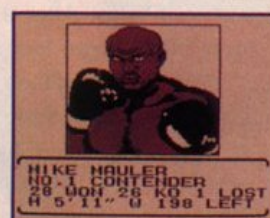
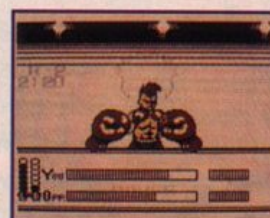
Gotta go! So many games, so little time!

HOT GAME BOY ACTION!

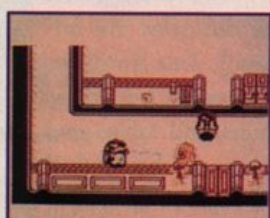
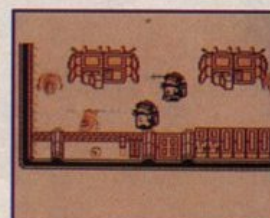
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CIRCLE #170 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Pigskin 621 A.D.

BY BALLY/MIDWAY

A long, long time ago, two well-known antiheroes, Attila DeSoil and Thor Akenbak, accidentally bumped into one another. Well, okay—they plowed into one another like two freight trains out of control.

But that's beside the point, for their chance meeting just happened to be on a 100-meter plot of seventh century A.D. English countryside. After the sniveling over the spilt ale stopped, they decided to settle the score (or lack thereof) in the traditional way of the time: by playing a good old-fashioned, no-holds-barred game of *Pigskin*.

Pigskin 621 A.D., by Bally/Midway, is a football contest of sorts where anything and everything is fair game. At the beginning of this two-player game, you can choose to be either Attila DeSoil and the "Mongrel Horde" or Thor Akenbak with his renegade Vikings. After a few battle cries of "Loot and pillage, loot and pillage, let's find us an English village," the game begins. The first half of the game is played in an open (the term is used loosely) field that is approximately 100-meters long. At either end of the field is the end zone. Scattered throughout this vast acreage lie various obstacles, such as a swamp, logs and a hangman's noose, that you must avoid as you attempt to cross the goal.

For the second half, the game is taken indoors. Played in the dungeon of a castle, the layout and dimensions of the playfield remain the same, but the obstacles are different. This time you must avoid trapdoors, chairs and tables and treasure chests that will trip you up as you make your mad dash across the room. Other objects such as swords, axes and maces can be picked up by your team cap-



BY
DONN NAUERT

If you thought you were familiar with the roots of the game we call "football," perhaps you should review history a little. Bally/Midway's *Pigskin* is a visual sample of what you could call "brawl-ball."

tain and used as weapons during the course of the game. The abused player is revived after a goal has been scored.

Each team consists of one team captain (Attila and Thor, known as "Gruntbacks"), two guards (one is called a "Goalsquatter" and the other is a "Hogtackle") and three forwards (two are called "Porkblockers" while the third is called "Running Boar"). Goalsquatters and Hogtackle won't cross midfield very often—they prefer to stay near your goal line as a last line of defense. Running Boar will try to stay in enemy territory as much as possible, while the Gruntbacks and Porkblockers have full range of the entire field. Trolls, special players to be named later, will join the game on the side of the underdog at the time. If you're good enough, you can face an entire team made up of trolls.

By using a joystick, each player controls his team captain while having indirect con-



trol of up to six other teammates (if you're playing the pro difficulty). This means that you can only select when they pass and punch by pressing the appropriate button on the controls. You can't control where or when they run.

Another button called the "team attitude adjustment button" allows you to select from three offensive and defensive attitudes your characters have. On offense, you can have your teammates go out for a pass or "scatter." "Block" causes your teammates to huddle around the ball carrier. On defense, choosing "man-to-man" spreads out your defense. "Get the ball" will make you

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CIRCLE #171 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

players more aggressive toward the ball carrier. The selection "bad attitude" works for both offense and defense and is basically a "take no prisoners" strategy.

Pigskin 621 A.D. uses the same character and graphic style found in other Bally/Midway games, such as *Rampage* and *Arch Rivals*, which is round, cartoonish characters. This style isn't striking or overbearing, but suitable for this type of game. There are a few good grunts and groans from the sound department but not much from the musical side. (What do you want in a sports game? Roseanne Barr? Yikes!) Overall, *Pigskin 621 A.D.* is a fun game to play, especially when played as a two-player game.

Ninja Combat

SNK (FOR THE NEO•GEO MVS)

They are the only survivors of the Shinobi family. Together, Joe and Hayabusa can stop the Shadow family and their leader Genyosai from terrorizing the people of New York City. But the road to victory is a long one for the two. With his powerful black magic, Genyosai has cast spells and deceived the pair's potential allies. Now they must fight through these lost souls before reaching their final confrontation at Ninja Tower.

Ninja Combat, the fifth title released by SNK for the Neo•Geo game system, is a martial-arts game in which you must guide either Joe or Hayabusa through seven levels of fast-paced action. You'll take these two video-game heroes through various parts of New York City, including an amusement park, downtown along the river and through the subways as you try to reach the Ninja Tower.

To complete the cleanup of each area, you'll do battle with a horde of ninjas that carry various weapons and have different ninja talents. Bibilinbi, the birdwoman ninja of Level 2, has strong legs and winged arms that allow her to carry on her assault from high in the sky. Itaizo, the Level 4 end boss, has large iron balls with spikes for hands.

Ninja Combat makes use of a feature rarely used in arcade video games (although I can think of a few for home and

computer games), one that allows characters that you meet—or in this case, defeat—to join your party. At the end of the first three levels, you'll be given the option of choosing between three new characters (giving you a total of five) to control through the different levels, each with his or her own characteristics and Nippon magic.

The first to join your *Ninja Combat* team is Musashi. As it turns out, he is also a survivor of the Shinobi family and with his two swords is able to emit a strong cutting ghost light as a magic. Kunoichi, a mysterious female ninja who joins you after Level 2, can produce tornados using her sword. Finally, Genbu appears in Level 3, stomping on the ground, causing the rafters to fall on the evil ninjas in the immediate area.

Weapons or items that our band of heroes (except Genbu, who can't carry a weapon since he's the sumo wrestler of the bunch) can obtain are found under various obstacles, such as barrel drums, or are dropped by the enemies when they are defeated. By walking over the weapon and



pressing the "A" button, you can pick up nunchakus and swords, which are the most common weapon that can be found, starting in Level 1. By pressing the "B" button you can drop a weapon, which will allow you to get spears, axes and fans, which can be obtained in the higher levels. There are also scrolls that you'll come across while playing. Green scrolls will increase your attack power, while blue scrolls increase your speed. Grab the yellow scrolls when they appear—they give you extra men. Other special items include sodas, hamburgers and the like, which will help recover your health by one notch each on the life meter.

Each character has his or her own special magic. By holding down the "A" button (the attack button) for a few seconds and then releasing it, your character will shoot off magic that will either kill the enemies on the screen or at least do several hits worth of damage. The various magics include the fire dragon used by Joe and the power thunder that Hayabusa uses.

You also have different forms of attack. Rather than pressing the attack button to punch or throw shurikens (knives), you can also press the "B" (jump) button and the "A" button at the same time to do a jump



Ninja Combat is from the second batch of games that SNK has for the Neo•Geo system. It offers one or two players the opportunity to battle it out with the Shadow family through New York City.

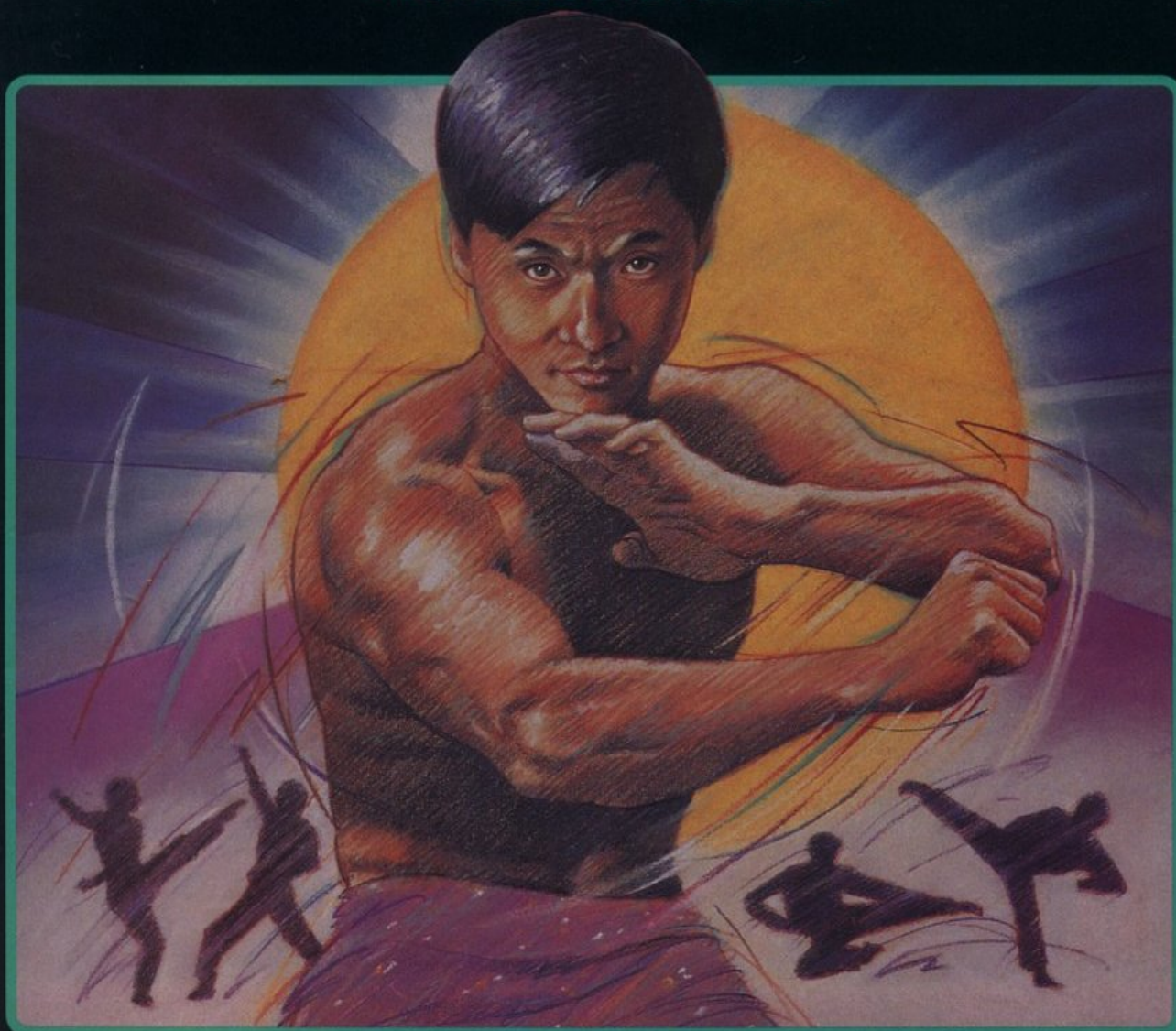
kick, or press the "C" (used to take evasive action or somersaults) and the "A" buttons simultaneously to do a flying leap.

Graphically, *Ninja Combat* is superb. The game designers and programmers made good use of the abilities of the Neo•Geo in producing this top-notch game. Simply do a somersault, and you'll see that the same care went into the animation. The game also has a good progression in difficulty. The first two levels are easy enough to allow the average gamer to get into the game and feel he's getting his money's worth. The higher levels, however, are not impossible but will take a few quarters to allow the player to get used to the timing in defeating different enemies. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the arcade in your area will already have this game so you can enjoy the experience yourself.

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CIRCLE #172 ON READER SERVICE CARD



An Interview With Alexey Pajitnov

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD MARTIN

THE SOFT EYES AND CALM DEMEANOR OF Alexey Pajitnov, the Russian inventor of *Tetris*, are a strong contrast to the rest of the Consumer Electronics Show surroundings. While everyone is rushing around to fill their eyes and notebooks with the frantic happenings and displays in the various CES booths, Pajitnov roams around the hall in full aplomb. But it's easy to get caught up in his contagious composure, as we meet in the Spectrum Holobyte booth. Before long, the show has disappeared into the background as we discuss the state of computer gaming from the Pajitnov perspective.

His latest game, *Faces*, is one of the strongest focuses at the show, an anticipated buzz that flies from person to person. The anticipation is not surprising when you figure that *Tetris* has sold 200,000 copies in its computer incarnation (from Spectrum Holobyte), countless more as an NES game and, more interestingly, as a bundled cartridge to the American version of Game Boy. The recent sequel (if you can call it that) to *Tetris*, *Welltris*, also sold well on computer, with 100,000 copies on the various platforms.

What makes it more fascinating is that, other than extraneous embellishments like the pictures of Soviet life



by Andy Eddy

that border the playfield, the games he designs don't require elaborate graphics or a super computer's processing speed to exist. It is simplicity and elegance in design—and a killer to master as a player. His approach to computer-game design is one that is being analyzed carefully—and, yes, copied—as a new wave of puzzle-oriented games come onto the market. In fact, Pajitnov relayed that the designer of Lucasfilms' *Pipe Dream* was inspired by *Tetris*.

Even stranger is that, after meeting and talking to him, Pajitnov seems an unlikely celebrity. But still, as he moves

through the throng of CES attendees, fingers point him out and whispers float through the din of multiple conversations. His attendance in this venue cranes as many necks as Madonna would strolling through your local shopping center.

Acknowledging this celebrity status, he notes how different it is in Russia. "It's strange because in our country nobody knows us," Pajitnov says, "and we can be very [productive]. All our work is for American and European computer users. We are very glad that the Western people like our games."

Playing Those Mind Games

It's not too hard to understand why Pajitnov's background is as a mathematician and programmer and that he cut his teeth working on such applications as CAD/CAM and artificial intelligence. All along, though, in the back of his mind, there was something else. "My own interest was the games," Pajitnov noted. "I very much like puzzles... and at one time I created *Tetris*," he said with a laugh, as if it weren't already common knowledge, "which became very popular."

What's even more fascinating is Pajitnov's motivation, which also explains his current working partnership with Vladimir Pokhilko, a Ph. D. in psychology at the Department of Psychology and Knowledge Engineering at Moscow State University. "Sometime after [he started working on computers], I understood that, for me, computers are not so interesting—that humans are much more interesting." This pairing is responsible for recent and upcoming spinoffs from *Tetris: Faces* (currently for computer by Spectrum Holobyte) and *Hatris* (soon to be released by Bullet-Proof Software for NES and Game Boy). The key to these games is that the player is required to use lots of brain power and formulate strategies, features that aren't as apparent in the countless shoot-'em-ups and kick-and-punch games so popular in the video-game world. Their attention to the "people" result, as opposed to the "computer" result, could be what makes their games so popular and intriguing.

"I don't like shooting games. If people like them, that means they are useful, but for us it's something greater," Pajitnov said. "It's very uninteresting to create a 'destroying' game—it's a very simple algorithm. It's enough only to create everything a player will destroy. Active games, where you have to figure out how a player will *create* something, is much more interesting for us. So now it's our position to make only constructive games."

It appears that this policy was a positive move; not only for the designers but for the player also—even Pajitnov realized he was on to something when he created *Tetris*. "When [*Tetris*] was ready, I called some psychologists and asked 'Come on, guys, explain why I can't stop playing this game!'"

But it's the game's *design* that really grabs Pajitnov. Somehow it's not surprising that *Tetris* doesn't really interest Pajitnov much from the player standpoint. "I'm not so hot at *Tetris*. I can't say I'm a bad player, and I can't say I'm a good player. I'm *absolutely* an average player." He'd rather concentrate on what makes *Tetris* popular and how to alter it or improve it into another manifestation. The

whole "*-tris*" series seems to be an endless tweaking, constant *what-ifs* off the initial theme.

Peering Into the Future

Pajitnov and Pokhilko acknowledge that there will be plenty of *Tetris* derivatives, as there are offshoots of all successful inventions, but it's insightful to hear them describe their visions into the future of game—or better labeled, electronic entertainment—design.

Our discussions turn to the fact that they will continue to work on projects for Spectrum Holobyte, then we fly off on a related tangent to touch on virtual reality. This concept, which is being researched, developed and expanded

at a couple of Northern California companies, puts the user "into" the environment created by the computer program. It takes place through the use of visors containing independent monitors for each eye, movement sensors that detect head position (for altering the computer-graphic perspective provided through the visor) as well as sensors that track other equipment and/or limbs (such as the swing of a tennis racket or the grasping of the fingers).

(See the article "Is It Live, or Is It Cyberspace?" in the January 1990 issue of VG&CE for more information on the work that's being done in this field.)

Virtual reality is still quite a way from being affordable for consumer usage—though Mattel's Power Glove touches on the lower end of this concept—but Pajitnov and Pokhilko both agree it could change more than just the gaming aspects of our lives. "I hope, as a psychologist, that virtual reality will make a change on drugs," Pokhilko concluded, emphasizing the possibilities that people would seek out electronic experiences instead of chemical ones. Again, the insistence on the *constructive* rather than the *destructive*.

As we shook hands and closed down our conversations about the computer-gaming *glasnost* they created, it struck me. All the fables I was told while I was growing up about the vast differences between Americans and Soviets were just that—fables. I imagined that, as I ate lunch in Los Angeles, Pajitnov could very well be at the beginning of a computer-game all-nighter, caught up in the pure enjoyment of a classic game of *Tetris* or perhaps testing a different algorithm for a new game.

No, we aren't all that different.



Welltris, Pajitnov's second computer game released to the Western world, takes Tetris, turns it sideways and makes a whole new contest out of it.



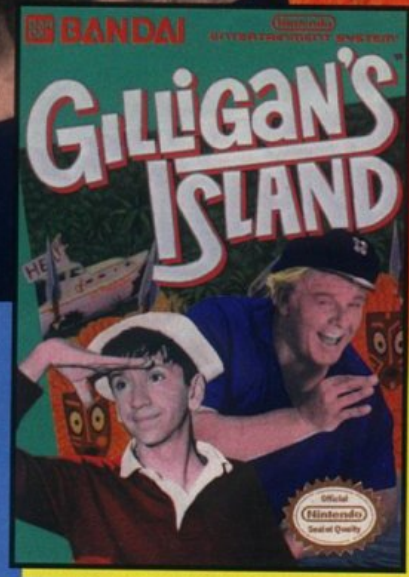
Bullet-Proof Software will be bringing out another Pajitnov creation, *Hatris*, shortly for the Game Boy and NES video-game systems.

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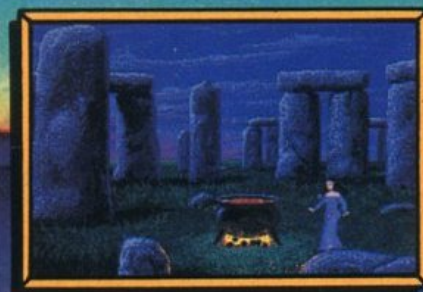
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CIRCLE #174 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Electronic-gaming fandom, which started as an idea in several of my earlier VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT columns, is going full blast. As the godfather of this new activity, I feel like passing out digital cigars.

Gaming fanzines are booming! Hundreds of video- and computer-game lovers have discovered the fun of writing, editing and reading fanzines. Fanzines usually aren't very slick, but they're tremendously entertaining. They're packed with opinions and a surprising amount of savvy about games.

Those who lack time or money to publish a fanzine can still participate. Most fanzines are available in exchange for a letter of comment (LoCs) on the previous issue. In addition, most editors would be delighted to print your well-written review or article. Fanzines are an amateur effort, which means that no one gets paid, but contributors always get free copies. And if you can draw, a few cartoons will keep those editors groveling at your mailbox for more.

Thanks to the support of VG&CE, a number of aids to the fanzine reader and publisher are available from me (see sidebar). I will also be glad to answer any questions about fandom, either in this column or by mail to anyone who sends a self-addressed, stamped envelope with their question.

Headline Correction

A previous review of the highly rated fanzine *cyberdrome* contained the wrong address. Editor Edward Karpp reports that the publication has changed addresses in the interim. You can get a sample copy of this excellent fanzine by sending \$1 to *cyberdrome*, P.O. Box 317, La Jolla, CA 92038.



FOCUS ON ELECTRONIC- GAMING FANDOM

BY ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This time he reviews some of the most interesting new fanzines.

Let's look at some of the most interesting recent fanzines:

The Subversive Sprite #3

Route 1, Box 236-C, Jasper, AL 35501

One issue/\$1

Ten pages

Can a fanzine editor be *too* opinionated? It's highly unlikely that many gamers will agree with every state-

ment in *The Subversive Sprite*, but no one is going to fall asleep while reading it, either! The editor isn't shy about giving his views on everything from newsstand magazine distribution to CD software, but he forgot to include his name and address anywhere in this absorbing issue. (I got the listed address from the fanzine's envelope.)

The main subjects this time are CD software, the new TurboExpress portable unit and professional electronic-gaming fanzines. There are also some good news notes and a selection of reviews of video and computer games. The writer leaps to a lot of debatable conclusions, but his passion for good gaming is so obvious that it's possible to tolerate the rashness.

What would improve *The Subversive Sprite* most, apart from more information about its anonymous editor, would be a letters column. This is a fanzine with a dozen controversial ideas on every page, and I've got a hunch most readers are itching to respond to one or more of them.

Turbographing #1

Russ Robinson, 6511 E. Church St.

Clarkston, MI 48346

One issue/50¢

3 pages.

Meet Russ Robinson, the articulate 15-year-old master of ceremonies for this small but interesting fanzine aimed at TurboGrafx-16 owners. Russ writes well and usually explains the reasons for his opinions instead of just stating them as uncontested facts. He makes *Turbographing* seem more pleasant and personable than some of the more strident publications.

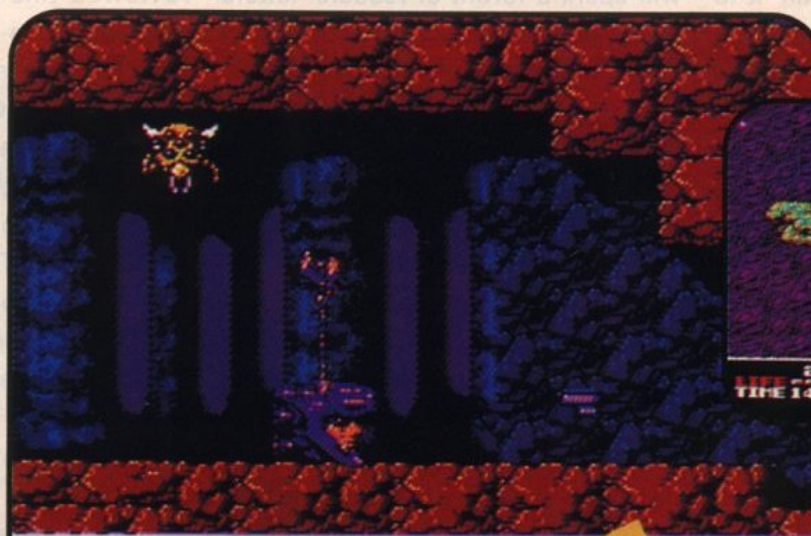
Another good point is that he doesn't express his love of the NEC

Stab!

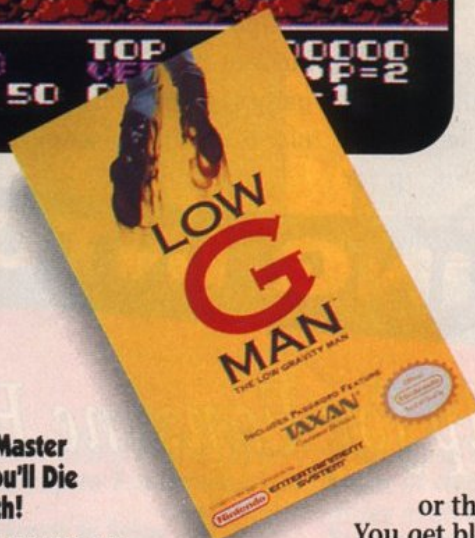


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CIRCLE #175 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

system as hostility to all the competing hardware brands. He doesn't waste a lot of space running down other video-game machines.

The cover is ghastly, but perhaps in future issues Russ will devote the cover space to more of the reviews and commentary that fill the balance of the fanzine. Russ takes an even-handed approach to software in his examinations of *Bonk* and *Takin' It to the Hoop*.

Also worthy of mention are his comments about the TurboExpress, and why he wants this unit so badly. It gives a good insight into his approach to the hobby. *Turbographing #1* is a good first step, and this enthusiastic, bright editor is likely to make it improve rapidly.

Turbo Tap #1

Jeffrey Lin, 3947 Arthur Ave.,

Lincolnwood, IL 60645

Four issues/\$3

2 pages

Jeff crams a lot of material into his two pages, including a detailed review of *Takin' It to the Hoop*, a hot tip for

Keith Courage, a critique of a professional magazine and brief reviews of three games. The format is acceptable, but it might look a little better if Jeff used *both* sides of one page.

His best piece is an intelligent analysis of one of the most serious weaknesses of the Sega video-game cartridge line, the quality of the documentation. Perhaps his comment will spark a forum of readers' letters on the general subject of rulebooks.

amiDETONATOR Summer 1990

Bryce Dawley, 413 N. Park Drive, Apt #1,

Arlington, VA 22203-2312

One issue/\$2

38 pages

If you own an Amiga and like games, you owe it to yourself to send for *amiDETONATOR*. Bryce is the dean of fanzine editors, and his magazine provides outstanding coverage of Amiga entertainment software. The current issue has news, reviews 50 games, offers hints for dozens of popular titles and presents views on many

gaming topics by Bryce and his sidekick Chris Rowley.

AmiDETONATOR is tough, but fair. Chris and Bryce dish out the praise, but they shred substandard disks with mad abandon. Don't miss this.

Try a Fanzine

The amateur magazines that were reviewed this month were all produced by video- and computer-gaming fans. They are labors of love and channels of expression.

Fanzines are a great way to meet others who like electronic gaming as much as you do and want to talk about it intelligently. The cost of producing a small publication is low, and subscriptions can get some of that back.

More fanzines are already piling up on my desk, so look for another set of reviews in an upcoming issue of VG&CE. Don't forget to send your video- and computer-game fanzine to Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

GETTING INTO FANDOM:

Help for Fanzine Editors and Readers

Fandom needs two types of people: fanzine editors and fanzine readers. Part of VG&CE's effort to foster the development of the electronic-gaming hobby is to put all those who want to publish computer- and video-gaming fanzines together with potential readers. Everything described in this section can be obtained from: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, CA 89107. Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you are requesting a list or reply.

Would you like to receive sample issues of current electronic-gaming fanzines? It's easy. Just send me your name and ask to be added to the "Fanzine

Readers List." The list will be distributed to fanzine editors who want to add interested readers.

Fanzine publishers who want to receive the Fanzine Readers List—more than enough names to make a first-issue mailing list—can request one from me at the same address. And when you publish those fanzines, don't forget to send them to me so I can tell VG&CE's readers about them.

Megagaming, the biweekly fan newsletter published by Bill Kunkel, Joyce Worley and I is available for \$1. It contains Bill Kunkel's fanzine reviews, Joyce's Worley's fanzine editors' advice column and all the latest news and reviews of the gaming world.

Seize!



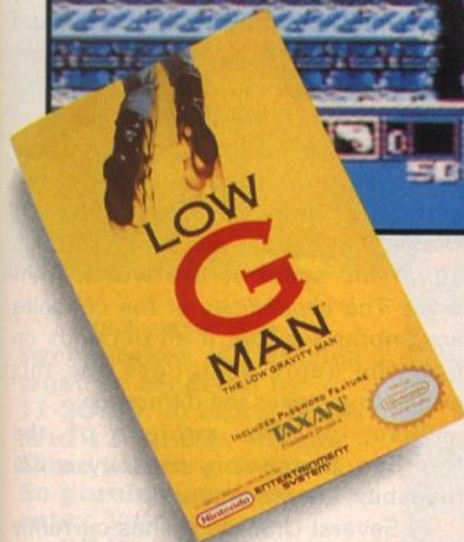
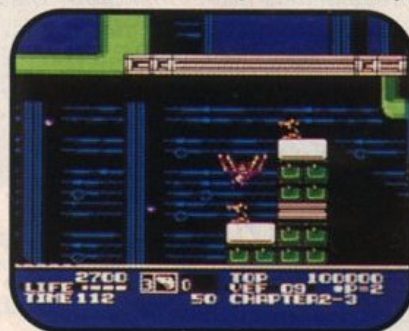
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CIRCLE #176 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

As always, lots of good stuff in the mailbag this month. Questions, answers and a Game Doctor Prize Packet (filled with promotional items, buttons, T-shirts, key chains, etc., from game publishers) follow, so let's get on with it. Our first letter is also the winner of this issue's Game Packet and the first correspondence the Doc has gotten from France in several years!

question

I adore your column tremendously. Besides the Genesis reviews, it's [what] I read first! I'm most likely your only French-based reader, and over here, video games are treated quite differently [than in the U.S.].

First of all, I'm a Mega Drive (Japanese Genesis) owner. At this moment the Mega Drive is imported unofficially in small boutiques. [This system] has several advantages, such as off-the-press games [like] *Final Blow*, *D.J. Boy* and *Phantasy Star III*, games that aren't even previewed in the States! But what concerns me the most are the disadvantages: The price [of cartridges] is three times more expensive than in the States (up to \$100 U.S.), and the games are imported in extremely limited quantities. My brother is taking a trip to the States, so I have several questions I'd like to ask you:

1) Are Genesis games compatible with the Mega Drive? Are the same colors accessible on a French PAL-Scan TV?

2) Are accessories such as the TeleGenesis modem or Arcade Power Stick compatible?

3) All my instruction booklets are in 100% good-old Japanese! Is there any way I can get the English versions through VG&CE or Sega? I wrote to Sega about eight months ago, and they never wrote back!

4) In France, it's rumored that Sega has created a disk drive, keyboard, CD-ROM [drive] and graphic tablet for the Mega Drive. Are any of these available in the U.S.A. (or will they be in a short time), and will they be Mega Drive-compatible?

5) The SNK Neo-Geo is available here (as is the NEC SuperGrafx). Do



Visit the Arcade Clinic!

by
the Game Doctor

you feel these machines are worth their high price? The Neo-Geo seems quite impressive with its cartridges that can store up to 330 megabytes!

6) During your many years of game study did you manage to come across any Japanese (or American) magazines dedicated only to the Mega Drive? If so, where could I get them?

7) When I heard about the Sega 16-bit in Japan for the first time, I searched for every bit of info possible. I came across a dilemma: Half of the magazines said the Mega Drive has a color palette of over 256,000 colors with up to 512 colors on-screen (non-scrolling, 256 on-screen with scrolling), and the other half said it had 512 colors in its pallet with 64 colors on-screen. Please clarify this for me.

—Antoine Peltier
Megeve, France

answer

Before we get down to the information, Antoine, I want to thank you for writing. It's great to get an insider's view of another country's game market, and I hope you'll write to me regularly in the future with more updates and excellent questions! Now, to your answers:

1) The Mega Drive and the Genesis are compatible, with a small cosmetic

difference in cartridge shape.

2) Since the TeleGenesis modem isn't available in the U.S. yet, we can't say if it's compatible with the Mega Drive, but the Arcade Stick is fully compatible.

3) Try contacting Sega of America again (573 Forbes Blvd., S. San Francisco, CA 94080). They have the English-language instruction booklets you need.

4) None of these peripherals are currently available in the U.S., and Sega denies the existence of several of them (like the CD drive). There is, however, a hand-held Sega game machine called the "Game Gear" that will soon be available outside the U.S. This system is rumored to be comparable to the NEC's hand-held TurboExpress, except it won't be compatible with Mega Drive/Genesis cartridges.

5) The Neo-Geo is not yet available in the States, but it will be soon. (See our information on the Neo-Geo in the September 1990 issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT.) The more-powerful NEC system is not for sale—nor are there plans to sell it as of this writing—in the U.S. Even where these systems are available, the amount of software is thin. For this reason, it's hard to tell if these advanced systems are worth their price. The *capabilities* of the consoles are impressive, but it all depends on how the game designers use this power that makes the difference.

Also, on the subject of the Neo-Geo, its memory capacity is 330 megabits, not megabytes.

6) Several U.S. magazines currently cover the Sega game systems extensively. I'd be amazed if there weren't several Japanese magazines that covered the Sega machines, but my inability to read Japanese handicaps me in this area of expertise.

7) 256,000 colors? No, the Genesis/Mega Drive has a palette of 512 colors, 64 per screen, 16 per sprite.

question

How can Sega make a game converter to play 8-bit games on a 16-bit machine? Does [Sega] slow down the

continued on page 194

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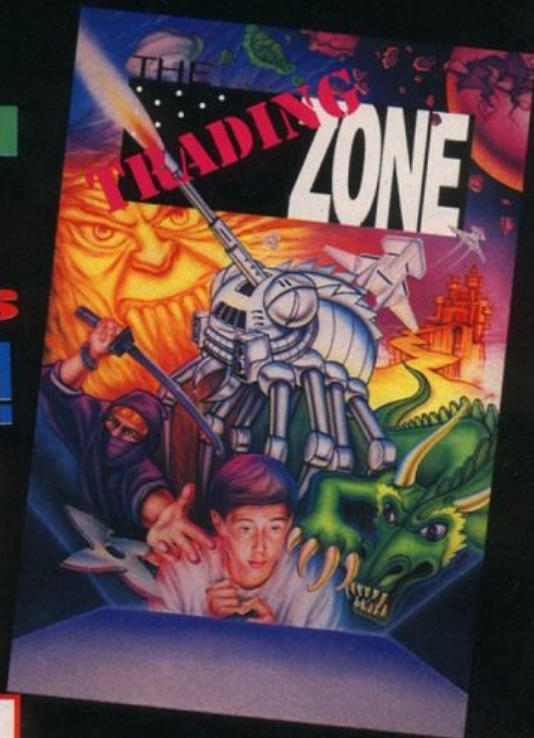
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CIRCLE #177 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



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Genesis so you can play it without ruining the cartridge? And please tell me if [Sega] plans to have a CD machine for the Genesis.

—Aaron Preston,
Reno, Nevada



Good to hear from a fellow resident of the Silver State, Aaron! Here's the scoop on the SMS adapter for the Genesis (and, in fact, every downwardly compatible game adapter ever developed for any system): No, they don't slow down the existing system—they totally ignore it. In fact, these so-called "adapters" are *actually* compact versions of the game system designed to run off its big brother's power source. So that means the SMS "adapter" is actually an SMS, and the only way it interfaces with the Genesis is through the power source, which it taps into, and the screen-display hardware.

Sega continues to deny that it will be bringing out a Genesis CD drive.



In the July issue of VG&CE there was some incorrect information about the TurboGrafx-16. The resolution for the TurboGrafx-16 is 512 x 224 pixels. Also, the TG-16 can display 482 colors on-screen while the Genesis can display only 64.

—Daniel Morgan
Aliquippa, Pennsylvania



See the responses to the first letter, Daniel, for more discussion of the Genesis' color-display capabilities. As for the TurboGrafx-16, it has a standard screen resolution of 256 x 216 in its standard graphics mode; in its overscan mode, which few games support, the res kicks up to 320 x 224. Maximum resolution for the Genesis seems to be 320 x 224. Both the Genesis and TG-16 work from a palette of 512 available colors, but while the TG-16 can display 256 colors per screen, the Genesis displays 64.

On this subject, let me recommend that interested parties obtain VG&CE's August '90 issue and read the excellent technical article by Frank Eva for a

more detailed discussion of the relative merits of the two game systems—as well as a look at how the ST and Amiga stack up against the new game machines.



I recently picked up a pamphlet at my local retailer regarding the Lynx. It read: "The Atari Lynx is the world's first complete portable color entertainment system. Lynx's 16-bit graphics engine provides outstanding color, dramatic graphics, fast action and game play. Lynx's 32-bit audio processor brings out realistic sound in each game for maximum enjoyment."

Is this true or does the Lynx use two 8-bit processors like the TurboGrafx-16 or what? In your magazine, you mentioned that the Lynx is more sophisticated than the NES or SMS, but not equal to the Genesis. Also, the Lynx advertises four-channel 32-bit sound. So are you telling me that the puny Lynx can pound out better sound and music than the mighty Genesis?!

Also, with all the graphic differences between the Genesis and the TurboGrafx-16, the Genesis being far superior, nobody mentioned anything about the sound differences between the two. Just how much better can the sound for the Genesis be than the sound for the TG-16?

—Ted Ching
Orange, California



The TG-16 supports stereo sound, but a \$34 adapter (called the TurboBooster) is required. The Genesis boasts nine-voice stereo sound if you use either headphones or your home stereo system. ("Voices" refer to the number of different instruments the system can reproduce; the more voices, the more "color" the resulting music possesses.) So the Genesis seems to have the edge, though once you pick up the TG-16's CD player, all bets are off.

As far as the Lynx goes, it's always deceptive to look at one statistic, compare it to the same measurement on another system and draw a conclusion. Computer sound and graphics comprise a wide variety of param-

eters, and without the complete picture it's dangerous to pick winners.

For example, as an earlier answer pointed out, the Genesis and TG-16 both work from a palette of 512 available colors, whereas the Lynx draws from a palette of almost five *thousand* colors. So I guess the Lynx is better, right? Wait a second; while the Genesis can display 64 colors per screen and the TG-16 can show off 256 at any one time, the Lynx is limited to a mere 16-color simultaneous display. The Lynx also has a maximum screen resolution of 160 x 102 pixels, compared to the Genesis (320 x 224) and TG-16 (256 x 216 without overscan).

According to Atari, the Lynx uses an 8-bit processor. However, it runs at a processing speed of 16 MHz, which is very fast. The Lynx also has four independent, simultaneous voices and does indeed produce four-channel sound.

The longer I spend in this field, the more I realize how deceptive these compare-the-numbers games can be. In many cases it's like the old poem, "The Blind Men and the Elephant." Three blind men stand around an elephant, trying to ascertain what an elephant is like. One grabs the trunk and thinks the elephant is like a huge snake; another the leg and assumes the beast is like a tree; and the third takes the tail and presumes an elephant is like a rope. In focusing on the details, in other words, they missed the "Big Picture."

Looking at any one or two specifications on these systems is just as tricky and leads to conclusions just as incorrect as the insights collected by the blind men. The bottom line, for most gamers, is to look and play the best games available on each system. The best software generally supports the known capabilities of the hardware, and it's a lot easier to determine which systems' games look and sound best to you by playing, rather than vivisectioning, them.

Remember, gang: Send your questions, comments, Vectrex cartridges, fanzines and assorted goodies to **THE GAME DOCTOR, 330 S. DECATUR, SUITE 152, LAS VEGAS, NV 89107**. See you all in thirtysomething....

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COMPUTER

GAME REVIEWS

Faces

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95), Macintosh (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Who could have guessed *Tetris* would become such a megahit when it was introduced as the first game brought to the West from the Soviet Union? Then came the next installment, *Welltris*. People thought, "Can they do it again?" Indeed they have! Alexey Pajitnov gives us his third installment: *Faces*. Guess what, fellow gamers? It may be the best one yet!

In *Faces*, players maneuver pairs of falling facial parts in an effort to construct complete heads. Each face is made up of five pieces that must be dropped in the right order. It is possible, and oftentimes funny, to mix different parts to complete a face, but these distorted heads are worth far less than the genuine article.

As the pieces fall, players move them left and right to position them over one of the five column positions. The pieces may also be swapped or rotated in an effort to get a better fit. The sections move left and right in unison unless a column is placed between them, at which time they may move independently of one another.

Since the pieces fall in pairs, there are times when a piece doesn't fit anywhere and will inevitably ruin any face it falls on. This face must then be started over at this higher position. Should a column reach the top of the screen, the game ends. The only way players can lower a column is by completing a face.

Each of the game's ten different levels sports its own eye-catching backdrop. Gamers advance a level by completing ten faces, and each level contains its own

unique personalities displayed with exquisite detail.

Faces features a number of play options that add to its attractiveness. Gamers may play solo, against up to nine competitors, or go head-to-head with a friend via modem. Players may start at any level and at varying difficulty settings.

There are over 60 mugs on-disk, ranging from famous historical figures to popular monsters. It even lets you draw custom faces using a third-party drawing program, then import them for play.

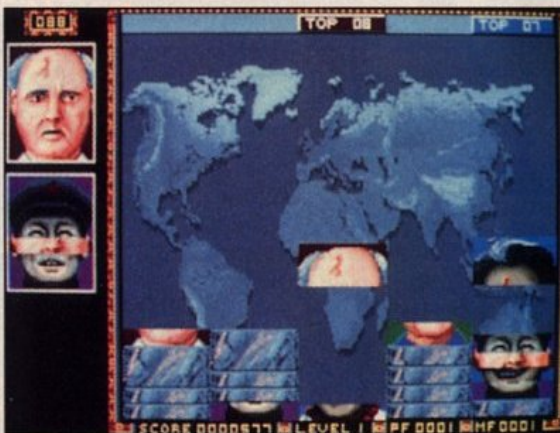
The only negative thing about *Faces* is a paucity of audio effects. Although the Ad Lib soundtrack is nice,

people without this card hear almost no sound effects whatsoever. This oversight doesn't detract from the playability by any means. After all, what kind of sound can one get out of a PC speaker anyway?

In short, if you liked *Tetris* and *Welltris*, you're going to love *Faces*.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
(415) 522-1164



Spectrum Holobyte's *Faces* is the third in a series of games to come to the United States from Soviet game designer Alexey Pajitnov.

Les Manley in: Search for The King

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga (\$59.95), IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Fans of Sierra adventures, especially the *Space Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry* series, might be surprised when they see Accolade's name on Steve Cartwright's *Search for The King*. *Search* is a parser-driven graphic adventure so similar in look, play and substance to Sierra's product, gamers will probably be calling Sierra

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PARKER BROTHERS

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CIRCLE #179 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Accolade's Les Manley in: Search for The King is a comical adventure with the same sense of humor found in Sierra's Space Quest series.

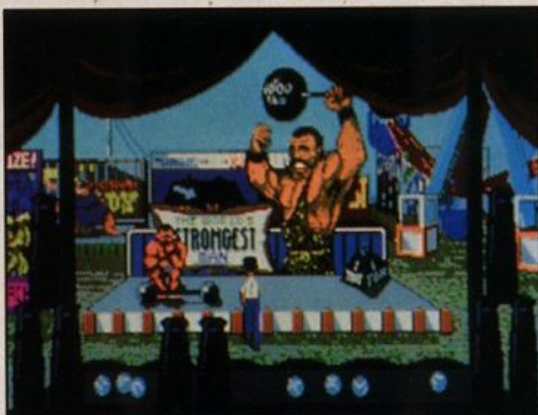
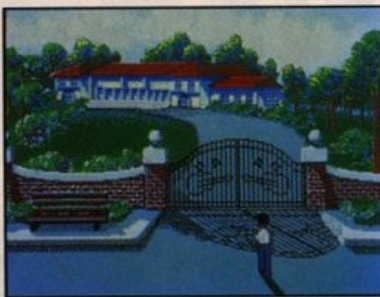
ra's help line for hints.

Les Manley, your player-character, is a sad sack-type strongly reminiscent of *Space Quest's* Roger Wilco. Les is on a quest to win a contest by locating "The King"—the never-named Elvis Presley—in a game that uses all the established Sierra protocols, including everything from the interface and visual presentation (cut-away walls, multiple perspectives, etc.) up to and including the scoring system.

The similarities are both positive and negative. On the plus side, the graphics are extremely attractive, and Russell Shiffer's sound effects and musical score maintain a high audio standard throughout the game. There are loads of cute visual touches, including a cameo roll-on by a skateboarding Bart Simpson and Les' reflection in a running puddle of water as he walks along a city street.

The game also makes good use of humor. The funny stuff is mostly that, funny, and an ongoing motif of alluding to the fact that the user is playing a game lends a nice, surreal quality. For example, the player can't take the radio on Les' desk because the cord isn't "long enough to reach into any other scenes." The player also encounters the game's storyboard artist, Justin R. Chin, at one point, but Chin can't stop and chat because he's on his way to "finish drawing the next scene before you get there."

On the downside, the game is *extreme-*



ly linear. Les cannot walk anywhere the designer doesn't want him to. For example, try to cross the street anywhere but at the town's single crosswalk, and Les simply does not move. The player is also restricted in activities to a frustrating degree.

Search for The King herds the player relentlessly in the desired direction, refusing to allow any behavior that deviates from the preconceived plot. To an extent, all adventures suffer from this kind of linearity, but seldom is it so badly disguised.

Dealing with the *Search* parser is like a series of conversations with an obtuse and somewhat unpleasant know-it-all. Example: The player moves next to a chair and commands, "Sit."

"Sit where?" the parser wonders.

"Sit in chair."

"You're not staying that long," it smugly responds.

There's lots to like in *Les Manley in: Search for The King*, but here are a few more drawbacks besides its linearity. Its parser is too unsophisticated to qualify as a state-of-the-art gaming experience, and there are too many inaccessible locations, unsatisfying conversations and phantom objects (they're there but Les either doesn't see them or can't take them).

On the other hand, it certainly looks and sounds nice.

—Bill Kunkel

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd., #200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

PGA Tour Golf

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Believe it or not, golf games and flight simulators have some important things in common. For one thing, they are both ideal subjects for computer simulation and for another, fans of these game genres never tire of buying new variations. One would think that with all the golf games

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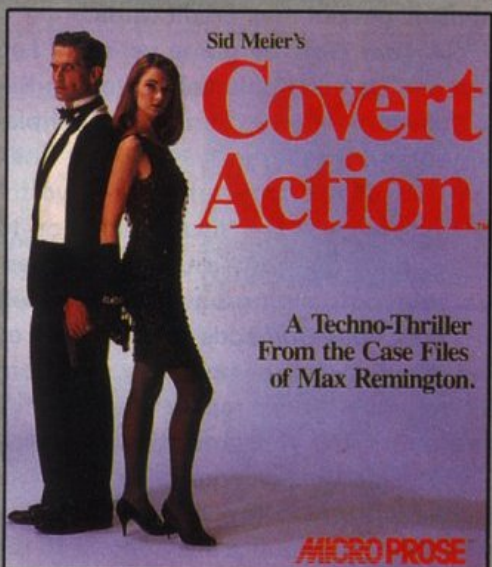
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and flight simulators available there would hardly be room to squeeze in any more. But every few months, like clockwork, someone brainstorms something new in graphics, interface or subject, and users get out their credit cards.

PGA Tour Golf, by game veterans Lee Actor and Dennis Koble (a/k/a Sterling Silver Software), is an extremely well-implemented and intelligently designed links simulation that brings some new, worthwhile elements to the field. In addition to the standard features (multiple courses, club selection, swing/backswing meter, etc.), *PGA Tour Golf* adds such niceties as wind direction, tournament play, tips from PGA regulars, tracer replay of especially good shots and the most sophisticated putting game in any computer simulation. Before each putt, a topographical putting grid shows every bump and contour of the green, and woe to the gamer who ignores this crucial information.

PGA Tour Golf is oriented around the Pro Shop screen, from which the player can play a practice round, join the tournament, visit the driving range or practice on a putting green. This screen also gives access to saved games, player stats, scores and camera views (PGA offers a dazzling array of visual perspectives).

Once a game starts, each hole is introduced with a swooping crane shot that takes the user from high above the fairway, down to the pin, then back to the tee. This is followed by a tip from one of the



touring pros and a top-down look at the entire hole.

At the tee, the user's surrogate golfer stands in the center foreground of the screen and shoots into the distance. A wind gauge appears in the lower left of the screen while the important stroke/power bar is

positioned directly under the golfer. A text window at the lower right contains supplemental information on everything from the current distance to the hole to the club being used.

The graphics, while not especially glitzy, are well done and emphasize the game's playability as opposed to its visual sizzle. New screens are drawn quickly, and PGA maintains strong visual continuity from one shot to the next. The exception

PGA Tour Golf, from Electronic Arts, is a highly playable simulation filled with lots of options and additional elements such as tournament play and tips from actual PGA players.

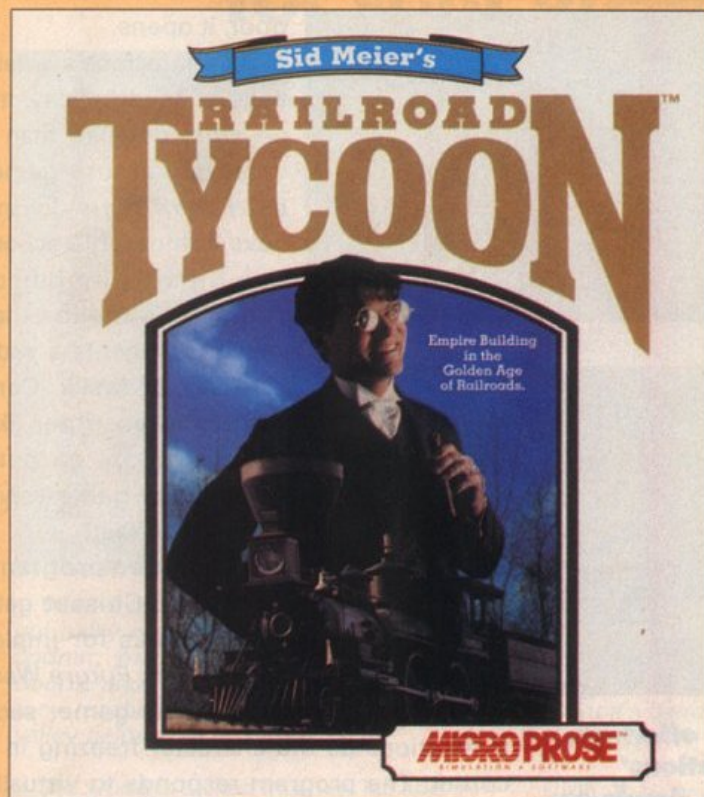


is obstacles that occasionally disappear. After one drive, a ball landed in the middle of a small forest, yet not a single tree was visible on the next shot! On drives, you might follow the ball off the tee as it sails into the distance, then pick it up almost instantly from a second "camera" positioned slightly beyond the point where the ball lands.

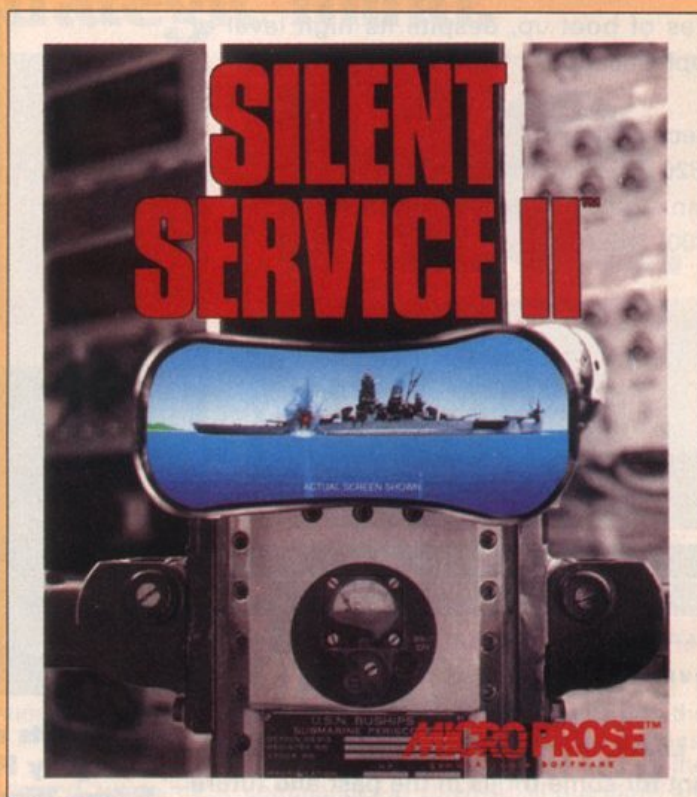
Music is nothing special and, like most golf games, sound effects are minimal. (Speaking of sound, although *PGA Tour Golf* is compatible with Ad Lib sound boards, it does not automatically detect them, as stated in the documentation; the Ad Lib driver must be loaded first.)

This simulation really shines in its playability. Even total golf poseurs will pick up on the play mechanics in minutes and, with the help of a quick visit to the

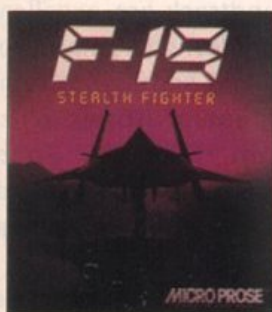
The Best of Times



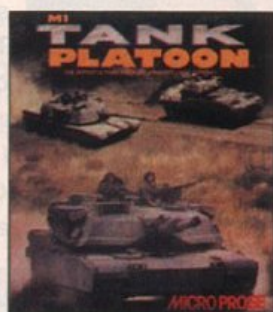
America's hot new best-seller takes you on a trip through the golden age of railroading in America and Europe. Compete with famous rail barons. Plan, build, operate, maintain and expand your railroad into a mighty industrial machine.



1990 brings phenomenal new graphics and game play to the World War II submarine game that won Simulation of the Year honors around the world in 1986. Stalk Japanese ships through the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to VJ Day.



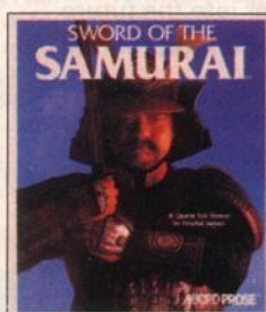
The Software Publishers Association named this one Simulation of the Year. Engrossing game play. Fascinating strategies. Revolutionary graphics. Based on America's radar-elusive jet.



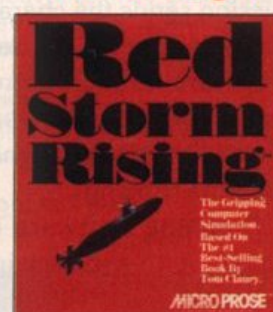
Command not just one tank, but a full platoon of four with controls so smooth they put single-tank games to shame. Call in jets, helicopters, artillery and Infantry support, too.



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driving range and putting greens, soon drive that little white ball down the fairway like a pro. Best of all, *PGA Tour Golf* feels as comfortable as an old shoe within minutes of boot-up, despite its high level of sophistication.

—B. K.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525

Future Wars

INTERPLAY PRODUCTIONS

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95), Atari ST (\$49.95), IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Leave the mundane world of the present for some thrills in the past and future in this interactive graphics science fiction adventure.

While working as a maintenance man, the hero of this puzzle-oriented challenge discovers a time machine. When it whisks him back through time to the Middle Ages, he discovers a trans-temporal conspiracy. Alien invaders will destroy mankind if the hero doesn't thwart their evil plans. This mission sends the character into the future and past to solve puzzles and fight mutant monsters. French game designers have not shown much inventiveness in plot, and *Future Wars* is generic, though pleasant, time tripping.

Delphine Software introduces a very simple point-and-click interface that's controlled entirely with the mouse. To move the hero around the multiscreen playfield, the computerist points the cursor at the desired destination and clicks a mouse button. The character walks to the designated spot with a fluidly animated gait.

The user picks other activities from a pop-up menu. The choices are: examine, take, inventory, use, operate and speak. The gamer highlights and clicks a menu choice, which changes the arrow cursor to crosshairs and prints the verb in the message box near the bottom of the screen.

Like its other offerings, Interplay Productions' *Future Wars* is a simple-to-play adventure that is filled with beautiful backgrounds and excellent musical passages.



The mouse positions the cursor over the object that receives the action. If the player selects *operate*, for example, and points

and clicks at an unlocked door, it opens.

The interface's weakness is its simplicity. It's no more detailed than a video adventure game, but *Future Wars* doesn't have comparable action. The small number of commands means that each represents a wide variety of tasks. Constructing an order like "operate carpet" makes the game seem rather abstract.

Designer/programmer Paul Cuisset gets good marks for implementation. *Future Wars* spares the gamer such

frustrations as the character freezing in a corner. The program responds to virtually all player actions, though too many replies are the same old dreary smart-aleck insults. Sometimes the player must reposition the on-screen character to click something with the cursor, but a pop-up window always informs when this is necessary.

Eric Chaht's graphics and Kean Baudlot's soundtrack are excellent. The hero is large and colorful, if somewhat reminiscent of Roger Wilco (from Sierra's *Space Quest*). The backgrounds are exceptional, dramatic

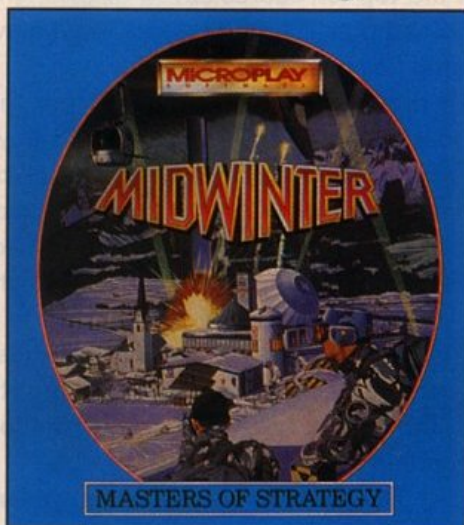
and well-drawn.

Future Wars won awards for "Best Adventure Game" in France, but it's not equal to the best of our domestic creations, including several recent Interplay titles. Still, the play system is so intuitive and effortless that fans of puzzle dungeons may want to sign up for these voyages to the past and future.

—Arnie Katz

Interplay Productions
1575 Corporate Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 549-2241

Three smart tactical decisions for your great strategic mind.



What if you flew your hang-glider north, got lucky enough to catch the afternoon updraft, made it to town, rallied your troops, and attacked the invaders just as they reached the narrowest part of the valley below?

The world is locked in a new ice age. A powerful enemy has invaded your small village to overtake your heat mines, your only source of heat and power.

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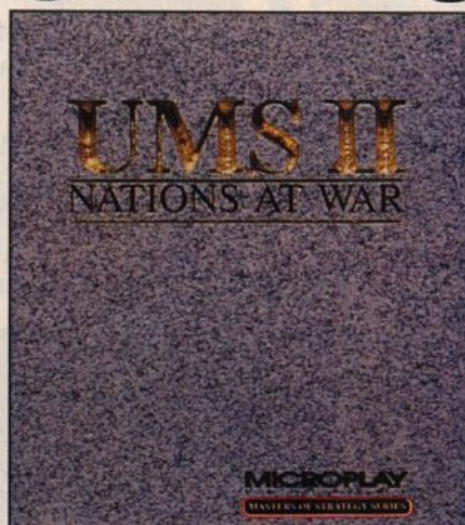
Innocent civilian equipment — skis, hang-gliders, snowmobiles and cable cars — suddenly become indispensable implements of war.

Manpower and equipment alone will never stop the enemy. Your community's only hope is superior strategy and leadership.

Strategy and leadership are up to you.

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What if Alexander the Great had fought Charlemagne?

What if Napoleon had brought more artillery to Waterloo?

What if a band of Indians attacked King Arthur's court?

UMS II is a sophisticated wargame construction kit that gives you absolute control of any military encounter you can imagine. You determine who fights, where, when, and with what equipment.

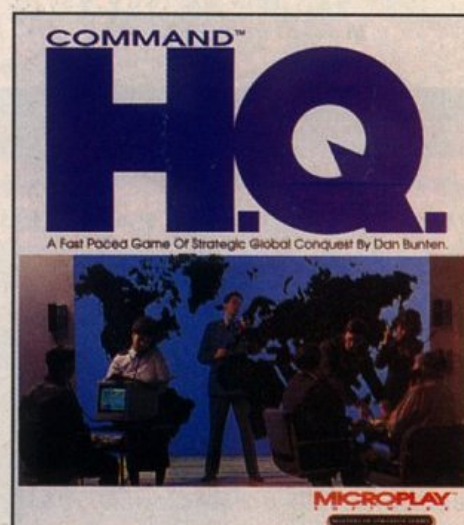
In fact, the guiding principle of UMS II is to let the player control everything, including the level of control he wants.

You can assemble a battle, watch it being fought, then tear it down and build it again with the changes you want. Maybe change the weather, maybe introduce hills instead of valleys, maybe give Custer a few thousand more men at Little Big Horn.

And you can see it all from any of four levels of zoom and magnification, from a global view of the whole campaign, down to a battle zone only 8 miles on a side.

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For Amiga, Atari ST, IBM-PC/compatibles, Macintosh.



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But when the conflict starts, an innovative animation window lets you see all the action as if you were right there on the front lines.

With its modem and direct connect capability, Command HQ lets you and a buddy send taunting messages back and forth as you maneuver to drive each other into submission. If your friend's not around, no problem... the shrewd computer opponent will give you all the action you can handle.

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For IBM-PC/compatibles.



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Block Out

CALIFORNIA DREAMS

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),
Apple IIGS (\$39.95),
Atari ST (\$39.95), Commodore 64
(\$29.95), IBM PC (\$39.95),
Macintosh (\$39.95)

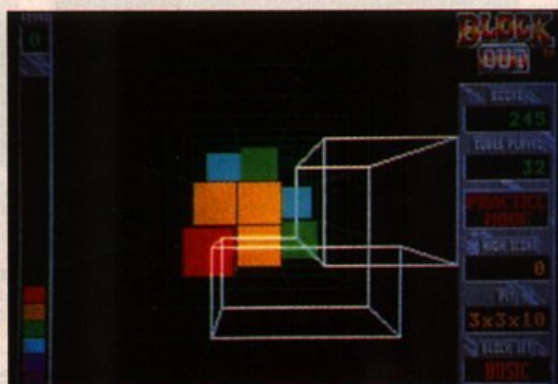
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Players first started manipulating on-screen cubes with the brilliant *Tetris*. Then came Alexey Pajitnov's attempt at quasi-three-dimensional block-play, *Welltris*. An inspired sidestep to the concept, it remained essentially two-dimensional. The designers of *Block Out* also raided the toy box for 3-D tumblers. The result may be the most successfully realized of all the 3-D games using connecting cubes.

Block Out found reasonable solutions to the playfield problem and to the challenging task of controlling the falling pieces in three dimensions. The view is from the top, rather than from one side, and the shapes are skeletal outlines through which the pit is visible. The piece may be rotated three ways with one set of keys and positioned over the pit with another. When dropped into position in the pit, the piece is filled in with colors according to the levels its component cubes occupy.

Beside the pit is a vertical "layer bar" showing what layers have been attained by color. As in *Tetris*, when a layer is completely filled, it disappears from the screen, and the layers above drop. From the overhead perspective, this is signified by their change of color.

There are a wide variety of play options to choose from. The dimensions of the pit may be three to seven squares wide or long and six to 18 layers deep, and there are three sets of block pieces to select from: flat, using one to four cubes, with all shapes one cube deep; basic, three to four cubes, several of which are more than one cube deep; and extended, which adds pieces constructed of five cubes. The total play combinations are said to come to about 1,000.



Block Out, by California Dreams, is an interesting variation of Tetris, adding a three-dimensional aspect to the popular geometric puzzle game.

A favorite setup combination may be saved to disk; it will be the default whenever the game is run. Every unique setup has its own "Hall of Fame" scoreboard, with the top-ten scores saved to disk. The demo and practice modes work in whatever setup has been selected.

All movement is controlled from the keyboard; there simply aren't enough ways to control the action from a joystick or mouse. For keyboards in which the cursor (arrow) keys are on the numerical keypad, movement can be easily controlled in eight directions. With the cursor keys in a separate cluster, the action is less convenient. Movement is smooth and highly responsive, and rotation speed is selectable.

The learning curve for controlling the pieces is reduced by three excellent techniques: 1) an animated help screen that shows the action of each cluster of keys that turns the shape on its axes; 2) a very watchable demo mode that shows how the game is played; and 3) a practice mode so the player can manipulate the pieces without time pressure.

Once the key actions have been practiced sufficiently to become second nature, the only thing to slow the play is how well the player masters spatial relationships.

Block Out isn't hard to learn, but the action is challenging and addictive. There is enough variety here for every player to find a satisfying game.

—Ross Chamberlain

California Dreams
c/o Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525

Champions of Krynn

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95), Apple II
(\$49.95), Commodore 64 (\$39.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



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NEW...

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The *Dragonlance* world (introduced in novels and role-playing games from TSR) makes a successful transition to computer in *Champions of Krynn*. It's not necessary to be familiar with the series, but fans of the novels will be in for a treat.

The War of the Lance is over and the Dragon armies have been crushed when the player creates a party to patrol the liberated territory. Soon the party finds treachery, fragments of a sinister plan and evidence that evil forces are on the rise again. Each clue discovered leads to more conflicts, as the game marches toward the final showdown with the semi-human draconian general, Myrtani.

All worthwhile computer role-playing games are complicated, and *Champions of Krynn* is no exception. Even after reading the documentation, creating and equipping a party takes a fair amount of time; however, a pre-generated fully equipped party is included for quick-start adventuring.

Until the adventure begins, players can adjust the characters' statistics and the difficulty level. At the novice level, for example, a dragon might have 38 hit points; at champion level, the same monster would have 115.

Logically laid-out menus are used extensively to provide an intimidating number of options. For example, when a player chooses to parley, it's necessary to select among five styles of conversation ranging from meek to abusive.

The graphics are outstanding. Players keep track of events through a window on the left side of the screen. Character

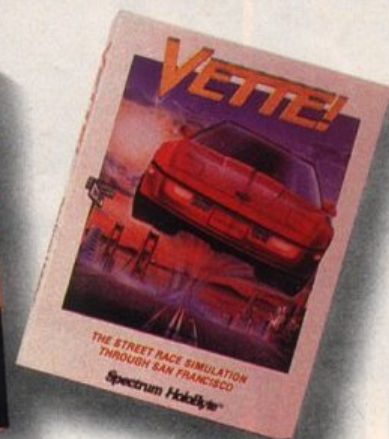
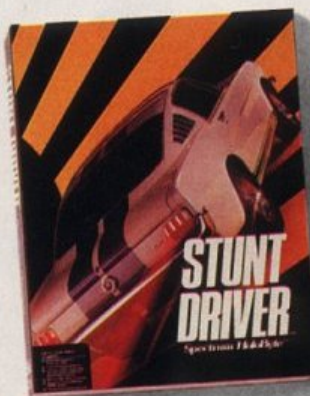


movement is shown on either a 3-D or overhead map of their surroundings. If there is an encounter, a semi-animated portrait is windowed (the dragon leers and winks at you as it blows smoke from the corners of its mouth). During conflict, a pop-up tactical map shows combatants as they attack and defend. Combat moves swiftly, even on older PCs.

Champions of Krynn's few shortcomings were probably the result of design decisions, not oversight. It's too easy to catch party members in area-effect spells like fireballs. The charm spell makes combatants change sides; then it's difficult to tell the allies from the enemies. Finally, it is impossible to restart from a saved position without quitting to the DOS level.

For the computer owner who has never

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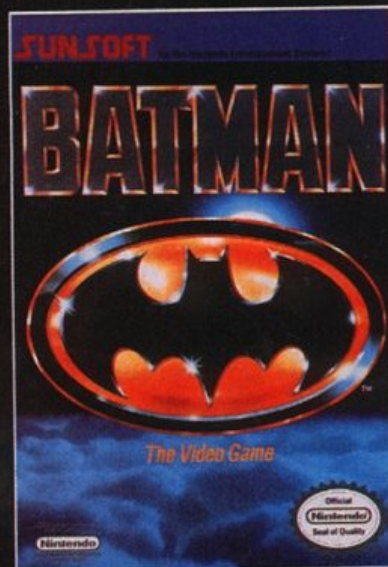
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BATMAN™
from Sunsoft.
Go For It!



played AD&D, this game is highly recommended; it's a great introduction to role-playing. For seasoned computer adventurers, *Champions of Krynn* is a "must have."

—Alan Roberts

Strategic Simulations Inc.
675 Almanor Drive, Suite 201
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 737-6800

The Cycles: International Grand Prix

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga (\$44.95),
Commodore 64 (\$29.95),
IBM (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The Cycles uses a first-person perspective of the competition to get players roaring through the International Grand Prix motorcycle circuit. Players compete in three major categories (125cc, 250cc or 500cc), although new bikers should stick to the low end until familiar with the controls and each track's features. Naturally, the bigger bikes are a lot faster, so players must anticipate the track more due to shortened reaction time.

Fifteen tracks from around the world, modeled in loving detail, have realistic placement of the curves, hills and tunnels, as well as distinctive, subtle undulations that make finding the groove that much more difficult. Unprepared cyclists may find themselves moving laterally into an opponent unexpectedly, resulting in a tumbling, sliding crash for both riders.

Any track may be selected and any number of laps chosen for the practice mode. Then, a single timed lap qualifies the gamer for pole position. Races are against nine opponents, each with different attributes and riding styles. Some racers are aggressive, frequently causing crashes while pushing their bikes to the limit. Others hang back and wait for the leaders to make mistakes before making

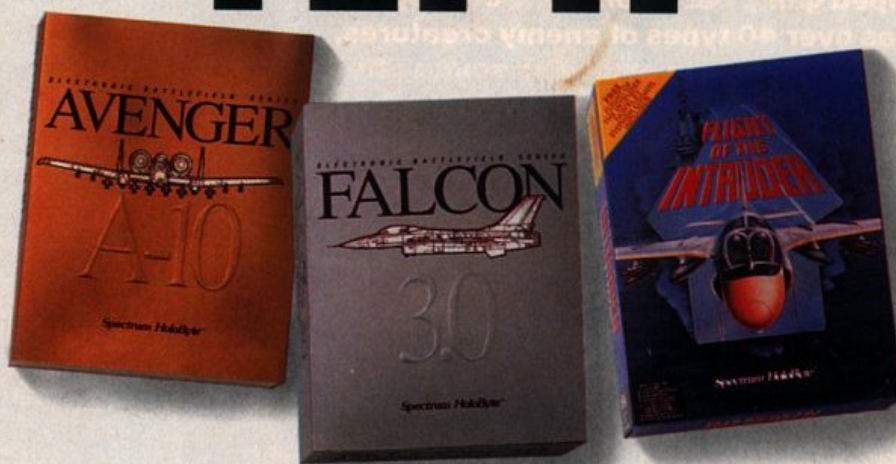


any move.

This diversity in the artificial intelligence increases the realistic feel of the product. It also draws the computer cyclist into grudges against certain riders that can carry over to subsequent contests.

The perspective is from behind the handlebars, with the character's hands, tachometer, speedometer and rear-view mirror visible. The latter is indispensable for

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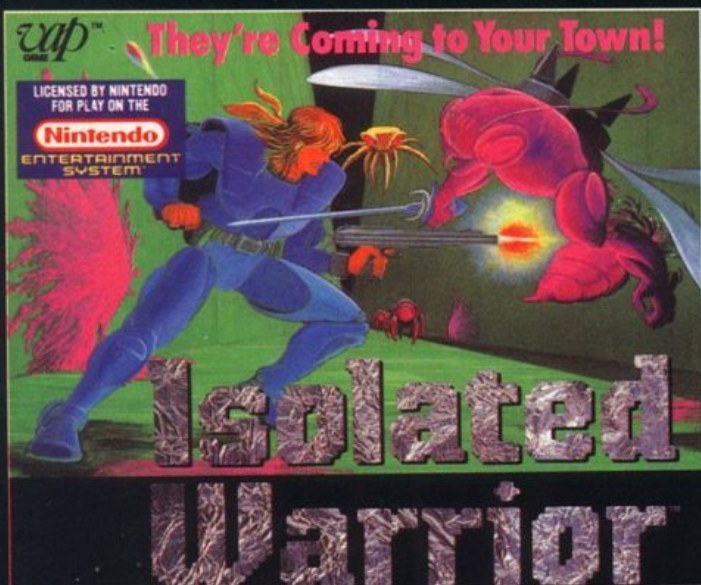
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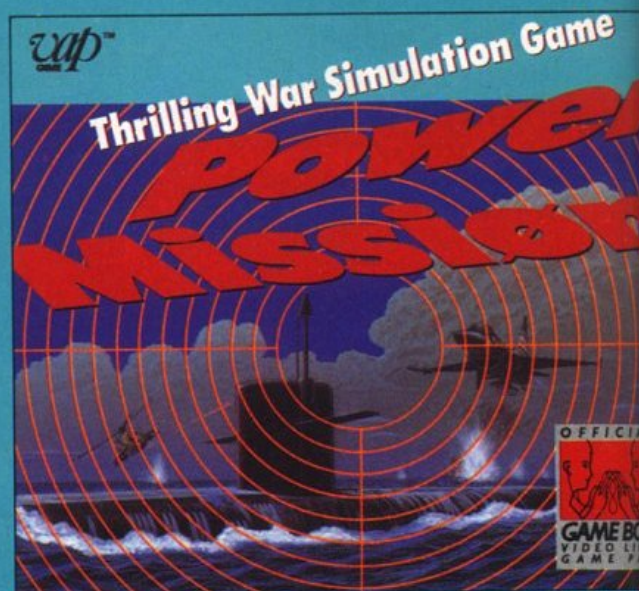
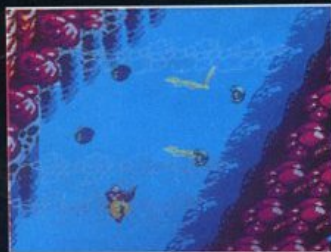
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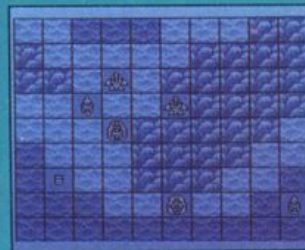
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keeping track of the competition. The player's position on the track appears in a separate window in the upper quadrant of the display. Using this display alone to anticipate the track is insufficient due to the intensity of the action. Racers must also be intimate with each track's features to be successful.

Additional playing aids on the right portion of the screen are a lap counter, cumulative time for the race and a time count for the current lap. Track features, terrain and background fly by commensurate with the speed one is traveling. The combined effect is so realistic, players may find themselves really getting into the action by leaning into curves.

Five levels of difficulty, from beginner to professional, involve manual or automatic shifts, the degree of engine damage possible and opponents' skills.

The joystick method of shifting gears is well-conceived, but loose or overly sensitive sticks do not work properly. A stick with a firm axis is required to keep the biker from sliding all over the road.

The level of Ad Lib support is not all that it could be. After the opening music, the program defaults to the internal speaker for the race itself. How difficult could it have been to include the rumble and whine of the big bikes?

The Cycles offers players a shot at the world championship. It will be a long hard road, but all the fun is getting there.

—Ed Dille

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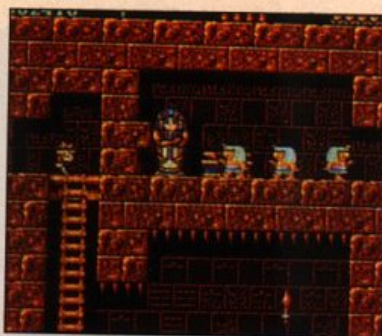
Rick Dangerous

MICROPLAY

Versions: Amiga (\$34.95), Atari ST (\$34.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The year is 1945 and only Rick Dangerous can save the world. Cut from the same



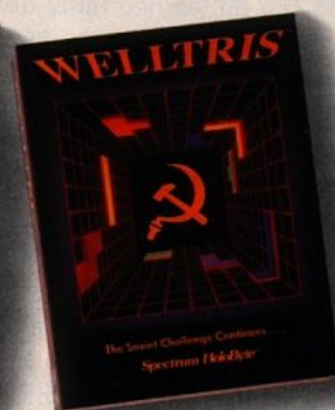
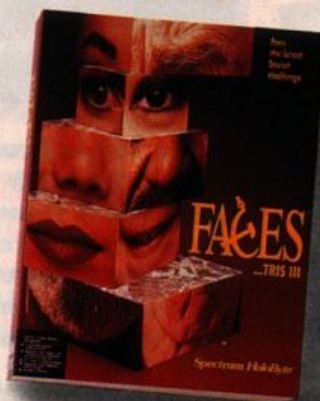
The Indiana Jones-like Rick Dangerous, by MicroPlay, is a series of four adventures that leads you through the Amazon Jungle in an attempt to find treasure, rescue hostages and save the world.

mold as Indiana Jones, Rick is a rough, tough world explorer who must find his way through four challenges, each set in a different part of the world with its own particular hazards.

Rick's adventure begins just after his plane crashes in the Amazon forest. He must explore and escape from an ancient Amazon temple filled with hostile tribes-

men sworn to protect it. Next he must avoid a band of ruthless assassins that populate an Egyptian pyramid while searching for the priceless jewel of Ankheh. The third phase of Rick's adventure requires him to rescue hostage Allied POWs held in the heavily fortified

PLAY IT



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Schwarzendumpf Castle. Finally, it's on to a secret Nazi missile base where only Rick can prevent a launch and save the world from nuclear destruction.

The plot probably sounds hauntingly familiar, but the play action saves it. A mere touch by any guard causes Rick to lose one of his precious lives. Hurling spears, falling rocks, spike traps and other hazards fill each area and must be carefully avoided for Rick to make it to the end. He's armed with a limited-shot pistol and several sticks of dynamite. While some caches of additional ammo are located along his path, their supply is limited, and Rick must plan each shot and explosion carefully not to waste shots.

Each section features a wide variety of hidden traps, in addition to the hostile enemies. Some require precise motion, such as jumping at the exact edge of a platform to miss a deadly fall into a spike pit. The variety of traps add an ongoing challenge and are very good by themselves.

All graphics look sharp, and the side views lend a feeling of depth and accuracy to their various settings. All animation is smooth and seamless. The seemingly digitized sounds, such as realistic gunshots and dynamite explosions, complement game play. While it takes some getting used to, the joystick interface is rather intuitive and can be learned fairly quickly. (The keyboard is used on IBM PCs and compatibles.)

On top of all this action, the game has a distinct comical feel. Puns are used in the text descriptions that begin each location. Deaths, either the player's or an enemy's, show the character flapping his arms as he spirals downward.

Death restarts Rick at the beginning of the current section of the action, often many painful screens back; and when all of Rick's lives are gone, play must begin at the start of the first level. Although some forced replay is acceptable, the amount required greatly detracts from the game. Even a way to skip the distinct locations, such as the Amazon temple, would have made the game much better, and a save feature would have been a tremendous enhancement.

Rick Dangerous is still an enjoyable and challenging experience, if not altogether

original. The highly charged adventure will keep gamers striving toward heroism again and again.

—R. Bradley Andrews

MicroProse Software
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

MegaTraveller I

PARAGON SOFTWARE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In the last few years, many computer-game companies have looked to other gaming fields for titles to translate. A wide variety of entertainments have made the

jump, from mainstream family board games like Clue and Monopoly to Advanced Dungeons & Dragons. So it is no surprise that the longest running science-fiction role-playing game has finally come to computer screens. *MegaTraveller I*, by Paragon Software, is based on Game Designers Workshop's very popular board

game. The Traveller rules, almost as old as the better known AD&D rules, were recently updated and rewritten into their current *MegaTraveller* package.

The game jumps right to the action. The party starts in a bar, where an undercover government agent gives your group a mission. Before she can finish, some thugs hop the group and the fighting begins. Surprised, overpowered and outgunned, the party must quickly regroup to begin their quest.

The whole mission falls a bit short of its tense beginning. All ship travel takes place within a small group of eight solar systems on the edge of the Imperium, divided into two groups of four systems. At the



The longest-running science-fiction RPG board game (from Game Designers Workshop) comes to the computer community in the form of *MegaTraveller I*, from Paragon Software.



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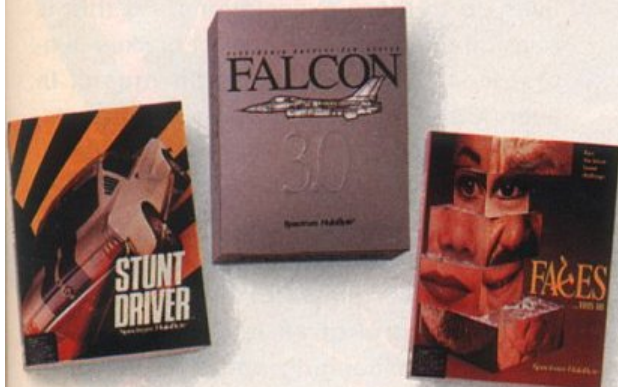
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Official entry forms with complete contest rules can be found at your nearest participating software dealer and in specially marked Spectrum HoloByte packages. Contest runs from 11/1/90 to 2/28/91, and you must be 18 or older to enter. No purchase necessary.

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start, the party is told to get to a bar on a planet in the second group, and the agent gives the group a ship to travel there. But since it only has a Jump 1 drive, and the target is two systems' distance, the whole focus of the first part is raising the cash, a tidy \$20 million, to buy a Jump 2 drive.

Several methods are available for raising capital: trading, piracy, goods location and even bounty hunting. Each method makes some money, but the only way to raise all the cash in a hurry is to hunt down, kill and turn in the dogtags of several notorious criminals. Once the Jump 2 drive is purchased, the final part of the game proceeds quickly, and the adventure is wrapped up—a bit of a letdown.

The character-creation system is one of the best aspects of the game. Not only are the stats rolled up, the user then must run the character through an actual military career, complete with promotions, training and mustering out bonuses.

The graphics are crisp, clear and attractive. In most views, the top of the screen shows the party members and inventory. Clicking here brings up detailed information about each character. The bottom section of the screen displays information currently pertinent to the party, including dialogue with other characters, different ship station views or an overhead view of the area of the planetary terrain.

Unfortunately, the game falls far short of its potential. This is Paragon's first futuristic game, and it shows. The role-playing elements seem tacked on, and actual game play is rather repetitive. The skill-learning and character-creation system is interesting and unique, but it's often hard to understand exactly how skills relate to the actual play. The worst failure of the game comes in combat. While the party can include up to five members, the additional four basically act as pack mules. Since only one character can take action during combat, the rest just stand around and get shot at.

Though the initial release was a bit buggy, the company plans future updates to fix all known bugs, revamp the character-creation system closer to the original rules and add some printing capabilities. This is available at no charge if the user mails the original disks to Paragon.

MegaTraveller I falls far short of its

MegaTraveller I is a space-based journey in search of a more powerful engine that will leap you a couple of solar systems away, but how you earn your bucks is up to your abilities in combat and your bartering of items.



hope for the future. Version 3.0 and any future modules should be well worth the money spent.

—R. B. A.

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Wayne Gretzky Hockey

BETHESDA

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95), Atari ST (\$49.95), IBM PC (\$59.95), Macintosh (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

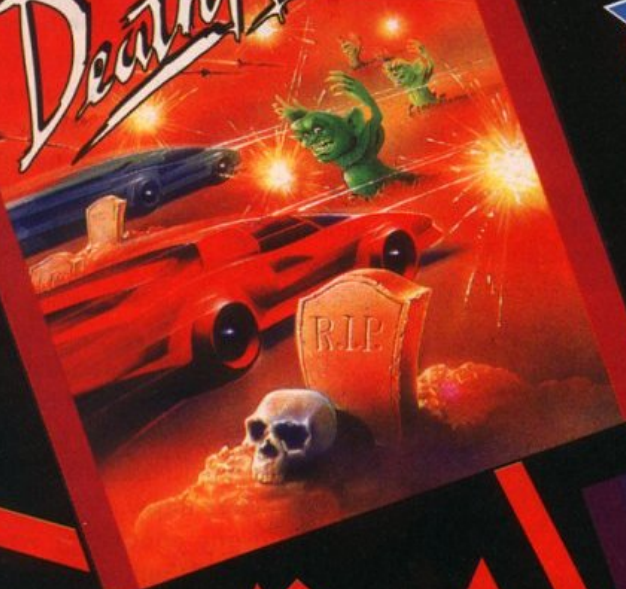
Hockey fans may rightfully expect great things from any product endorsed by the great one himself. *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* lives up to these expectations. All that is missing to achieve the perfect hockey simulator is the sound of organ music. In every other respect, from coaching strategies to the penalty box, the program delivers top-notch realism and excitement.

The simulation is played from a coach's viewpoint, ordering substitutions and setting up power plays, or the gamer may assume control of an individual player. The most challenging option is to act in the player/coach capacity, simply because it's tough to keep sight of the big picture when bouncing the boards. Two-player games are handicapped by selecting one of four different skill levels. Remember, the computer opponent is no slouch!

All game play occurs from an overhead perspective and encompasses approxi-

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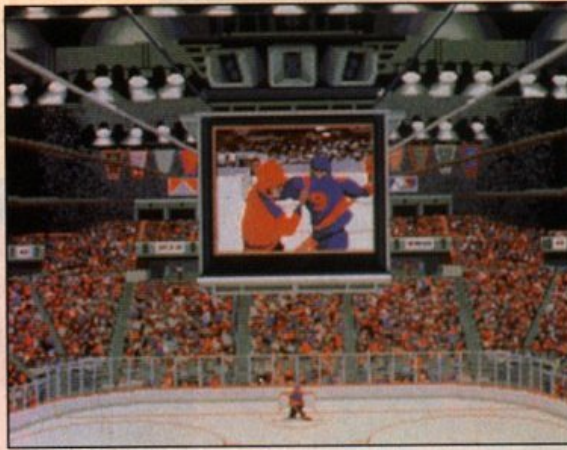


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mately two-thirds of the total rink. When a period begins, the ice is clean and unmarked. As the teams skate and fight with one another, the ice is marred—a nice embellishment. The player/character is distinguished from his teammates via a white helmet, not the

best choice considering the background color. As in real hockey, *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* moves fast; the player can easily lose track of the skater while keeping an eye on the puck.

The best graphic sequences are the fight scenes. When a fight breaks out, the view shifts to the monitor suspended over the rink for digitized animation sequences. The characters throw off helmets, tug jerseys, slug one another or wrestle each other to the ice. Bethesda Softworks realized that fights are an integral part of hockey and even developed a supplementary disk loaded with new slugfests for separate purchase. There are also yearly team disks for the NHL plus a league simulator that allows drafts and statistics management.

Each player is rated for 11 statistical groupings, including penalties. Individual skaters are controlled via the keyboard, joystick or a mouse. Mouse control is the only method that controls the speed of the skating. It's also the easiest method to position shots on goal.

Sound effects contribute to the realism of play. Bodies thump along the boards fighting for control of the puck, the crowd roars and the siren wails when a goal is scored.

All these minor touches are indicative of the loving detail encompassed in *Wayne Gretzky Hockey*. Until CD-ROM technology provides digitized images of actual players, this product will remain the standard against which all hockey simulators will be judged.

—E. D.

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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

How to Fight a Crime Wave

ACCESS SOFTWARE
Version: IBM PC

Crime Wave blasted Access Software into the arcade scene with a fury. This high paced shoot-'em-up pits the player against the sinister Mr. Big. The mission is to wipe out his criminal organization, rescue the President's daughter and restore peace to the land.

Once the game starts, immediately head right and try to keep moving in this direction throughout the game. The only way to clear a zone is to walk all the way to the exit at the far right of each section. Don't hang around in one place to destroy all the enemies. This is futile, since they appear continuously and eventually overpower our hero.

As often as possible, crouch while moving as opposed to walking. It may look foolish to slink along the ground as you move, but it's crucial for two reasons. First, there is less "person" for the bad guys to hit, and second, the player seems to actually move faster in a crouch.

Effective shooting must be mastered to win in *Crime Wave*. In the early stages, it's best to use the machine gun exclusively, since the supply of rockets is low. Rockets should be used only to destroy large

Access' *Crime Wave* is arcade intensity at its best, featuring not only great graphics and fabulous sound, but also high-paced shooting action as well.



objects, which are unaffected by gunfire. It's important to horde the rockets in the first part of the game; they are all needed down the road.

In addition to the normal bad guys, there are a couple of special enemies to watch. Be wary of the men who fire from fixed positions, such as train windows. To nail these guys, move up against the train, out of their line of fire. Then jump up and fire as you reach the enemy's level.

The ninja is another tough thug. These guys must be destroyed quickly. Their weapons are extremely nasty. Should they get off a star or two, quickly duck behind an object as these stars home in. The player has to trick them into hitting an object.

The last pair of enemies are the robots that appear at the end of the drug factory and in the final battle sequence. These two robots may look different, but the strategy for destroying them is the same. In both situations, players must continuously jump up and down, firing a rocket into the eye of the robot. This location must be hit about ten times before the enemy explodes. Remember to keep jumping. This makes it more difficult for the robot's fire to discover you.

A successful game requires careful use of objects and bonus rooms. As far as objects on-screen are concerned, the general rule should be fire first and ask questions later. Many seemingly useless objects hide crucial items

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such as energy or extra lives. This includes soda machines, fire hydrants and, of course, barrels. Use the rockets to blow these things away and uncover the valuable prizes.

The bonus rooms are incredibly important. Each chamber contains two bonus lives. Never leave one of these rooms unexplored. The first life is found right in the beginning of the room. The second will fall if you pass by the exit by an inch or two. Remember this and don't just walk out as soon as the exit door appears.

Entering all of these rooms adds to the time it takes to complete the game, but they can earn players upward of 30 extra lives. These are certain to come in handy in the final battle.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Cruising in Your Street Rod

CALIFORNIA DREAMS

Versions: Amiga, Commodore 64, IBM PC

Ever wonder what it was like back in the '50s? How it felt to get behind the wheel of one of those old scream machines and drag your way to victory? Well, California Dreams granted that wish and more in their new high-speed racing simulation.

The secret to success in *Street Rod* is to start off on the right foot. This means buying the right car and getting some wins under your belt as quickly as possible.

The 1955 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer is the best choice early on. Once you've bought it, use the remaining money to buy a dual four-barrel manifold and two four-barrel racing carbs. This will require selling the carb and manifold that came with the car. This engine work gives the player a pretty fast machine to start with.

Once the car is gassed, head to the drive-in to pick a challenge. In the beginning, it's best to check out the other cars as they cruise by. As they pass, the computer places them on your challenge sheet in order of increasing difficulty. This helps avoid accidentally challenging a pro too early on.

Once a challenger is selected, start with the drag race for \$10. This is a straight drag where reflexes are all that matter. When the light has been red for a second

Not only is it necessary for you to be the absolutely best racer possible in California Dreams' Street Rod, but you also need to build up your hot rod with better parts in order to keep up with the challenging competition.



or two, hit the gas to bring up the RPMs. The instant the light turns green, hit it! Once you begin motion, immediately swerve left and smack the opponent a couple of times. This almost always slows him down—and, besides, if you don't, he'll most likely do it to you. Once ahead, just stay in the center and keep the pedal to the metal.

Once confident with dragging, move to the road race to earn big bucks and even pink slips! Start this race the same way as the drag, by quickly accelerating and bumping the opponent. Once ahead, accelerate to maximum speed on the straightaway to get as big a lead as possible.

When the first turn indicator lights up, it's time to change gears. Slow down to take the turns, accelerating only in the straightaways. The key to a successful road race is cool wits, knowing when to floor it and when *not* to hit the gas. Also, since the course doesn't change, try to memorize the roadway as much as possible so that next time it will be easier to speed through it.

In general, watch the gas level and the engine wear closely. It's

frustrating to ruin a good game by running out of gas or blowing a tire. Once there's a considerable amount of money in the kitty, switch to a bigger engine with a manual transmission. Manual shifting takes a bit of practice but must be mastered in order to beat the king. Remember that the better racers are fickle and may not race a car that isn't impressive so keep the car clean with a fresh paint job.

Finally, to race the king, players must have a number of wins against the better drivers, as well as a *hot* car both inside and out. Don't even attempt the race unless you've got one of the top cars such as the '63 Corvette or the '53 Pontiac Silver Streak. Even these vehicles have to be souped up quite a bit to stand a chance against the "King of the Road."

—F. T., Jr.

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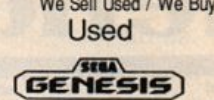
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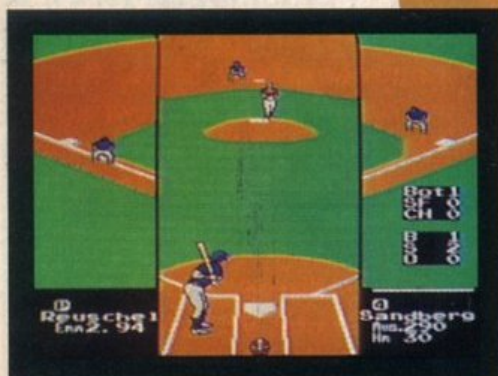
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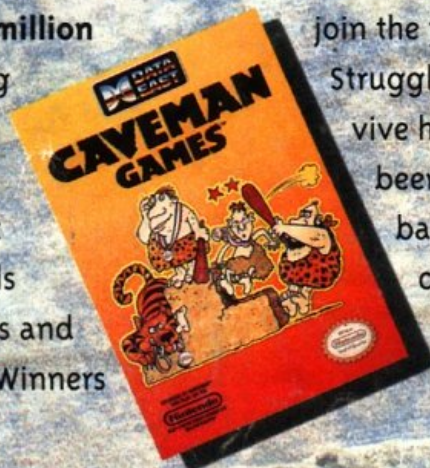
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